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MULLAI-P-PĀṬṬU

THE IDYLL OF THE JASMINE

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T. P. MEENAKSHI SUNDARAN

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MULLAI-P-PĀṬṬU

THE IDYLL OF THE JASMINE

BY

PROF. T. P. MEENAKSHI SUNDARAN

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FOREWORD

BY

SRI C. SUBRAHMANYAM
Minister for Finance and Education, Madras

Mullai-p-Pāṭṭu is one of the Ten idylls, which have, by their profound charm and deep insight, contributed greatly to the glory of Tamil literature. This sweet poem has however always remained a challenge to students of Tamil literature, and has baffled the understanding of even the most erudite scholars. The poem lends itself to diverse interpretation but none among them has been found convincing and perfect.

The first commentator, who took up the challenge, is Nachinarkiniar, whose scholarly commentaries on Sangam literature have earned for themselves a distinct place in the Tamil literary world. His commentaries have helped us to understand not only the significance of many poems but also the meaning of many words which otherwise would have become obsolete by now. Even such a great commentator like Nachinarkiniar could not do justice to Mullai-p-Pāṭṭu. Though his interpretation has helped to throw some light upon this charming poem, it has not unravelled all the mysteries hidden in it. Among recent commentators, who tried to give a new interpretation, mention must be made of Sri Maraimalai Adigal. But it is Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaram, who, with his deep insight and vast scholarship, has been able to place before us an interpretation, which is as new as it is delightful. Not only the people of Tamilnad, but lovers of Tamil all over, will be grateful to Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaram for this masterly work.

More and more such original and valuable works should come out, so that we may share with the rest of the world the glorious heritage of our Tamil literature.

PREFACE

The world is not as familiar with the Dravidian family of languages of India, as with Sanskrit and other allied languages. Tamil is, perhaps, the earliest to develop a highly cultured literature. Dr. Caldwell had tried to explain the importance of this language; and Dr. G. U. Pope had given a translation of its monumental works like Tirukkuṟaḷ and Tiruvācakam; but, they are not the earliest poems in Tamil. The poem taken up for critical appreciation and study in this present work, is, however, one of the most ancient poems in Tamil. Like the morning sun, these classics are always fresh and refreshing. They are valuable as the oldest treasure of the Dravidian people. They find their most modern echo in all our hearts. Thus runs the perennial stream of ever renewing ideals.

The poem, apart from its antiquarian interests and poetic beauties, is a challenge to modern intellect. As the tradition of these poems, in a sense, had been lost, perhaps during what the historians call 'the Kalabhra Interregnum', their interpretation, inspite of the attempts of various scholars from time to time, has, always, been something of a riddle. There have been translations, but they cannot present the challenge and inspire further study. It is this challenge that is tried to be explained in the following pages. This old poem is, here, re-interpreted from a new point of view, which is one way of stating the problem to the modern age.

Though it is neither a Government nor a Government-sponsored publication, this is the first Research publication of the Tamil Department of the Presidency College of the Madras Government, where the author was appointed as the Chief Professor, specially, to conduct and direct research, in addition to the work of teaching the Honours and Post-Graduate students. The Government of Madras Prize for the best book of Essays in Tamil for the year 1952, which the author won, was utilised for this publication, and the author is grateful to the Government of Madras for accepting his request that the

proceeds from the sale of this first publication may be utilised for the publication of further research works of this Department. His thanks are due to Sri. C. Subramaniam, the Minister for Education and Finance, Government of Madras; to Sri. Sundaravadivelu, the Director of Public Instruction, Madras; to Sri. Balakrishna Nayar, the Principal, Presidency College, for giving him the necessary permission and facilities for this study and publication and for their personal interest evinced in this work; to Dr. M. A. Dorai Rangaswamy of the Madras University for his kindness in going through the proofs; and to Sri. G. Srinivasachari for the personal interest he took in getting the book through the press.

Madras,
31-3-1956.

T. P. Meenakshi Sundaran

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

அ	a	உ	u	ஐ	ai
ஆ	ā	ஊ	ū	ஒ	o
இ	i	எ	e	ஓ	ō
ஈ	ī	ஏ	ē	ஔ	au
		ஃ	k̲		
க்	k	ட்	ṭ	ப்	p
ங்	ṅ	ண்	ṇ	ம்	m
ச்	c	த்	t	ய்	y
ஞ்	ñ	ந்	n	ர்	r
ல்	l	ள்	ḷ		
வ்	v	ற்	ṟ		
ழ்	ḻ	ன்	ṉ		
ஜ	j	ஷ்	ṣ		
ஶ	ś	ஹ்	h		
ஸ்	s	க்ஷ்	kṣ		

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TO

SRI. K. KAMARAJAR,

The Chief Minister of the Madras State

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I

The earliest poems in Tamil go by the name of Caṅkam Literature. That Literature consists, according to modern research, of two collections, one, the eight great anthologies (Eṭṭu-t-tokai) of short verses; the other, the collection of the longest verses of the age, viz., the Ten Idylls (Pattu-p-pāṭṭu). One meets with poetic elaboration, in these Ten Idylls, which is not so fully developed in the eight anthologies, famous for their beauty and brevity, their restraint of feeling and concentration of thought.

II

Amongst these Ten Idylls, the fifth is the "Mullai" or the "Mullai-p-pāṭṭu" or "The Jasmine" or "The Pastoral Song". Its author is Na-p-pūtaṉār or Pūtaṉār, the Great. The colophon to the poem describes him as the son of a merchant of the gold market of Kāviri-p-pūm-paṭṭiṉam. This city is the famous capital of the ancient Cōḻas and the important port of the East, known to the old Greek writers, as the great Kāviri emporium, "Kaberos," lying at the mouth of the river Kāviri. The author, therefore, must have been familiar with the high lights of the national and international life of his times. The prefix 'Na' in his name, as found also in such names as Na-k-kīraṉār and Na-c-ceḷḷaiyār, means "the Great." There is no other poem by this author now available, and his title to greatness is evidently based on the supreme excellence of this single poem. This poet is sometimes identified with Pūtattāḻvār, the second of the three so called First Āḻvārs of Vaiṣṇavism, on the basis of the identity of names and on that of the description of Viṣṇu in the opening lines of the present poem; but the Āḻvār, according to tradition belongs to Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam as distinguished from the author of this poem, belonging to Cōḻamaṇṭalam.

III

The age of the Caṅkam, i.e. the third Caṅkam is according to many scholars, considered to be the period covered by the two centuries before and the two centuries after, the birth of Christ. This is based on the "Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ-Gajabāhu"

synchronism, established by Cilappatikāram, where Gajabāhu of Ceylon of the 2nd Century A.D. according to Mahavamso known to us through Rājāvaḷi as the King responsible for the introduction of the 'Pattiṉi' Cult into Ceylon, comes, to worship at the altar of Kaṇṇaki, the Pattiṉi, or the Chaste, newly raised by Cēraṉ Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ of the Caṅkam age. This view is still further strengthened by the similarity of the descriptions of the Tamil country and its trade, as found in the Caṅkam poems and in the writings of the ancient Greek writers. The coins of the early Roman Emperors like Augustus, found in the excavations in the Tamil country, go only to confirm the tale of the Greek geographers as that of eye witnesses. The references to the Mauryas (Puṟam. 175, Akam. 69, 251, 281), the Nandas (Akam. 251, 265) and their Capital Pāṭaliputra (Akam. 265) on the river Sōn (சோனை) (Kuṟuntokai 75), in the Caṅkam literature, are equally significant. The northern expeditions of the Tamil kings should have preceded the Golden age of the Guptas. The poems themselves are admittedly anterior to the Pallavas of the age of Campantar and others; and anterior also to the age of the Kalabhra Interregnum. Lately, a few scholars have questioned this synchronism and the historicity of Cilappatikāram. The present writer is of opinion, that, even if the historicity of Cilappatikāram be denied, the tradition of the synchronism, confirmed by other historical sources, continues to be valid. All are agreed in fixing the age of the Caṅkam as the Pre-Pallava age; therefore, it must be not later than the third Century A.D., if not the earlier period of the early century of the Christian era.

IV

The students of Tamil should be grateful to the late Dr. V. Swaminātha Iyer, who has given us scholarly editions of the Ten Idylls with the ancient commentary of Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar. His editions of the Caṅkam works — the finest product of a life-long loving research — have opened the eyes of the savants to the glories of the Ancient Tamil land, with such remarkable results that the need has been felt for starting the History of India on the banks of the Kāviri instead of on the banks of the Ganges and the Indus. The works of Caṅkam, arranged author-war, in one volume, has been is-

sued by the Śaiva Siddhānta Samājam, under the editorship of Tiru. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, formerly the Head of the Tamil Research Department of the Madras University. The services of Mr. M. Balasubrahmania Mudaliar, the then Secretary of the Samājam, cannot be exaggerated.

Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ, who was known before he took up the holy orders as Nākaippaṭṭiṉam Vetācalam Piḷḷai, has given us an original appreciation of the poem with a critical review of the commentary of Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar in his own mellifluous pure Tamil. Though this is the result of his lectures to his B.A. students when he was attached to the Christian College, it has a permanent value as a pioneer work on literary criticism. He interprets the poem as it runs without torturing the text. This new interpretation has to be examined in our review of this poem.

The University of Madras has done yeoman service in prescribing this poem for its B.A., Degree examination, thus popularising the book among its alumni. This happens to be the only method of popularising the classics inspite of the adverse effects on them of an atmosphere of examination. Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ gave his valuable work on Mullai-p-pāṭṭu in response to his students. Dr. Swaminātha Iyer himself has issued an edition of Mullai-p-pāṭṭu with his own short notes on the poem and its old commentary for the benefit of College students. Such notes have been issued by others as well, notably by Sri. Gōpālakṛṣṇamācāriār and Tiruciṟṟampalam Piḷḷai.

Attempts have been made for placing this book in the hands of foreigners. There is a translation of the Ten Idylls by the late Mr. Chelliah of Jaffna published with an introduction by our late lamented Swami Vipulānanda. My friend Mr. V. Kandaswāmi Mudaliar, formerly the Headmaster of the Chintadripet High School, has also translated the Ten Idylls in verse and in prose with his interesting notes and illustrations.

For helping a more critical and deeper study of this poem a word index with notes has been published by Tiru Iḷa Aḻakaṉār.

V

But Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar remains the first great guide to the unknown land of Caṅkam literature. In India the ancient

commentator is honoured as much as the author, if not more. But for his gloss, the work would have remained a sealed book. Naccinārkkiniyar is thus famous as the commentator on Mullai-p-pāṭṭu and other works. There must have been other commentaries before his, but his work has so eclipsed them all that they unfortunately went out of existence. From his own commentary, one can arrive at their existence. Stray references to and explanations on, some of the lines of this poem are found in the works of other commentators on Tolkāppiyam like Iḷampūraṇar. Naccinārkkiniyar seems to eclipse even these greater lights.

Naccinārkkiniyar is a Brahmin scholar of Bhāradwāja Gōtra as the colophon to his commentary shows. He belongs to the Maturai country and to the 14th century A.D. For, it looks as though he is referring to Nannūl by his phrase 'the people of this time' (Tol. commentary Cūtram 881-939 a work on grammar which belongs to the reign of Cīya Kaṅkan of Kulōttuṅka III (1178-1216 A.D.). Naccinārkkiniyar also quotes (Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi 2463), though not by name, Kabārdi, the father of the great Sanskrit scholiast, Mallinātha who is considered by Dr. Bhandārkar to have lived in the 13th century.

The commentator belongs to Maturai. His services to Tamil language can never be forgotten. He has written commentaries on Tolkāppiyam, Pattuppāṭṭu, Kalittokai and the Jain Epic Cintāmaṇi and the now lost commentary on Kuruntokai. His knowledge of the Caṅkam works is profound; he is simply immersed in them. He has studied them critically. He belongs to the 14th century, an age full of glamour for the aggressive revival of Sanskrit learning, which, succeeding the Muslim advent and onslaught, attempted to eclipse Tamil scholarship itself. Naccinārkkiniyar, however is so very much impressed by the ancient works of Tamil land, that he begins to speak of the ancient Tamil authors as Ṛṣis or Seers on a par with Vēdic Seers. He is a Brahmin by birth, and he finds all that is good in Brahmin thought, clearly expressed in these ancient Tamil works. If he has an iota of doubt about the eternal principles he believes or about the Ṛṣi-hood of his authors, he might have proceeded much more critically, as he does in interpreting the Jain Epic Cintāmaṇi, his commen-

tary to that being a monument to his dispassionate but reverential, critical but sympathetic, attitude. But with reference to the Caṅkam works and Tolkāppiyam he is refuting the other school of thought then decrying these poems, by himself showing that the works contain the quintessence of the Hindu lore. If he has not attempted this kind of interpretation, these works would have been long forgotten. And for another reason, Tolkāppiyam tradition has been replaced by Avinayaṉār tradition and Tolkāppiyam itself has become a mystery. The commentators like Iḷampūraṇar, Pērāciriyar and Cēṉāvaraiyar who precede Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar have to grope in the dark. These bands of scholars from time to time, thus have been reviving a tradition to which others paid only lip service.

VI

These commentators are conscious of the growth of the language and therefore, of the truth that Caṅkam poems must follow rules, different from those laid down in Tolkāppiyam which belonged to an anterior age. But their conception that Tolkāppiyam ruled the Caṅkam, leaves no room for extensive deviations. Therefore, they attempt to cramp the poems within the obsolete Tolkāppiya Sūtras to suit the Caṅkam tradition. Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, writing on both the works, sins both ways.

There is further the legal fiction of a static truth; and all the great Commentators of India follow this fiction. These great commentators merge their personalities in the personalities of their great authors. The great discoveries and codifications they make, they are humble enough to feel and recognise in the works they annotate on. Sankara feels that his Advaita philosophy in all its original elaboration is found contained in the Upaniṣads and Brahma Sūtras. So do Rāmānuja and all the other commentators. It is this idea which drives them to propound their theories in the guise of interpretations. The commentators on the Smṛtis or legal codes illustrate this position more clearly. Society is ever moving and so does its legal code. History is a dynamic flow, but these commentators look upon it as a static but a glowing light. According to them the Sanātana Dharma is the never changing self-luminous Absolute. The Vēdas and Smṛtis ex-

press this truth. The society—the best traditions of the best of the souls—is its embodiment. Thus arises the problem of explaining the present by the past. But the commentators arise from time to time, to explain their customs and beliefs, as the expression of this unchanging Absolute. As times change and as conceptions change, the commentators practically legislate anew in the shape of their interpretations. The elaborate Mitākṣara and the Dāyabhāga are no more than new legislations on the law of inheritance, by means of forced interpretations or of detailed theory of offerings to the manes.

If their humility and the legal fiction are left out of account, these commentaries remain great as independent expositions of law and philosophy, grammar and poetics. The rules of interpretation may be safely left out of account. Taken in this light, Naccinārkkiniyar's works shine as independent works on grammar and poetics. They thus have a value of their own, though they may cease to be commentaries. They have, therefore, to be studied as such. This does not mean these works have no value as interpretations and commentaries; they are admittedly commentaries and profess to be so. Their rules and meanings have a general validity of their own. The historical criticism developed in modern times, forces us to distinguish two different strata in their commentaries—the one, the original contribution of the commentators, and the other, their interpretations. Even when one disagrees with the interpretations as a whole, the meaning of individual words and phrases remain valid and probably these commentators form the only source of any such knowledge for us. The same is true of Naccinārkkiniyar.

These commentators are walking encyclopaedias and view these works they are commenting on, from various points of view of the various sciences and conflicting books known to them, so as to arrive at a harmonious picture. In the result, they have to propound, at times some theories which appear to common-folks like ourselves, subtle and strained. Some such thing is happening in the commentary on Mullai-p-pāṭṭu itself. Naccinārkkiniyar is so overwhelmed by the memories of the various intricacies he has mastered in Tolkāppiyam and the Caṅkam literature, that he is forced to weave out a curious theory of poetic construction, to solve all the problems which he himself creates. He has woven a

theory of a cacoon, round himself to protect the growing meaning of the poem, which meaning unfortunately can come out into the world only by tearing away the cacoon itself. Perhaps the torn shreds of this cacoon of a theory are equally valuable for scholars.

VII

This poem is labelled "Mullai" but the later-day scholars have come to call it "Mullai-p-pāṭṭu". What does it signify? The meaning of "Mullai" is given in the Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University as follows:

1. Arabian Jasmine, a medium shrub—Jasaminum Sambac.
2. Trichotemus flowering smooth Jasmine, a medium climber—Jasminum Trichotomum.
3. Wild Jasmine.
4. Eared Jasmine.
5. Pointed leaved wild Jasmine—a medium climber—Jasminum Malabaricum.
6. Indian birth-wort.
7. Forest or pastoral tract—one of ain-tiṇai.
8. A melody type of the forest tracts.
9. A secondary melody type.
10. Patient endurance of a lady during the period of separation from her lover.
11. Chastity.
12. Chief characteristics.
13. Victory.
14. Mullai-p-pāṭṭu. (This very poem under discussion).
15. Mullai-k-kuḻal or a flute or a pipe with mouthpiece made of Mullai creeper.

These meanings, appearing to be varied at the surface, are inter-related at the core. In Tamil, the poetic theme has three strata—the 'Mutal' or the primary stratum; the 'Karu' or the womb stratum, and the 'Uri' or the intrinsic stratum. There is first of all the ideal background of place and time for making the theme concrete. This is the 'Mutaṟ-poruḷ', the first category of poetry. Second comes the 'Karu-p-poruḷ', beasts, birds, trees and shrubs and creepers with their leaves, flowers and fruits, and last the men and women with

their occupations, hobbies and holidays, their worship and their fine arts, which make the place and time alive with a poetic significance. It will be explained later on, that these, due to the varying emphasis laid by the poet, form the source of all the rich suggestions of poetry; thereby justifying the name, the womb of poetry. Third comes the 'Uri-p-poruḷ' which belongs to 'poetry-in-itself', the real or intrinsic category of poetry—the action of the hero and the heroine which forms the story—the real poetic characters for whom the other two strata form a back ground. The hero and the heroine have (1) their inner life of love or mental action and (2) their outer life or war with the exterior world or the life of overt action; these inner and the outer aspects forming a unity like the obverse and the reverse sides of a coin.

Mullai is one of the five manifestations of the intrinsic poetic category according to Tolkāppiyam. Its inner or inward aspect is the patient endurance of the heroine (meaning No. 10). In time the significance of this conception, as revealed by this very poem, has to be examined. This shines as the glorious virtue of chastity (No. 11) and as the chief characteristic or the ennobling quality of a man or a woman (No. 13). This latter meaning itself will show that it is not the woman alone who is involved in the co-operative commonwealth of the sweet home. The outward aspect of this 'Uri-p-poruḷ' is the victory of the invasion. Thus Pālai (Separation) and Vākai (Victory), as will be shown later on, have their genesis in Mullai and grow to cast their shadows on this Mullai itself. The ideal place for the action of this theme is the forest tract full of bloom (No. 7). The ideal time is the rainy season, especially the evening of the rainy season, when the happy couple stay at home. The Koṉṟai, Tōṉṟi, Kāyā, Kōṭal, Piṭavu, Atiral, Mullai and Vaḷḷi are some of the plants; the calves and the cow, the reindeer and its mate, are some of the beasts. Varaku and its harvest form the occupation, in addition to grazing and herding. Shepherds and shepherdesses are the residents of the Sylvan tract—their arcadia. God Māyōṉ or Tirumāl or Viṣṇu is their God. These form the Karupporuḷ of the forest tract under which head the peculiar music and musical instruments are also enumerated (No. 8, 9 and 15). Probably the musical tune is related to the modern Mōhana rāga.

VIII

Possibly, as explained by Iḷampūraṇar, the tract is called Mullai, because of the Mullai flower, the characteristic flower of the arcadia (No. 1 to 6). It is because of this pre-eminent position, that this flower has gained the loftiest significance of chastity of which it stands as a unique symbol all over India, in all times, with its unsullied purity and innocence of white colour, with its charm of suffused light and fragrance, with a ray of hope as it were in the midst of the gloom of the advancing darkness, with its shivering tenderness evoking pity, and with its sweet radiance of a welcome smile. In this poem itself, this white bud, slowly blossoming into a fragrant flower inviting with its sweet honey, the bees to hum around it like the music of a lyre, offers thus a veritable feast to the five senses, with its humming lyrical music to the ear, with its sweet fragrance to the nose, with its velvety softness to the touch, with its beautiful form of white colour to the eye and with its pure nectar to the tongue. This flower slowly peeps up its head, beaming with its joy of purity and divinity, from among the paddy (Paddy is a sign of fecundity) overflowing in the measuring vessel—carried by the women. This flower in the paddy is a beautiful symbol of the Mother Earth and the ray of loving divine light of the Universe—the libido and the sublimating hero, in the language of Jung. This flower is carried thus reverentially by the great and ancient dames of piety and love. On this rainy evening, when the cloud enlarges and encompasses the sky, like their God Tirumāl, and when these divining dames go to read the future. This glorious blooming bud is therefore the starting point of the poem and represents the very incarnation of all that 'Mullai' signifies in Tamil poetry. A poem is often called after its key word or heart of its poetry. One may not be wrong in suggesting that this title of the poem grows out of the significant word 'Mullai' in the phrase "Naṟu vī mullai". But the poems of Kuṟun Tokai, Naṟṟiṇai, etc. are found under the five labels of Kuṟiñci, Neytal, Marutam, Pālai and Mullai called the 'aintiṇais' or the five-fold ennobling activities of man. It has been assumed by the commentators that the title of this poem Mullai is one such label. A study of the poem, it is hoped, will make the suggestion now thrown out by the present writer more reasonable, if not conclusive.

CHAPTER II

THE POEM

I

Instead of offering a translation, a paraphrase is attempted here, so as to explain the scheme and purport of the poem. The poem may be said to consist of three sentences, as marked by three predicates, though, it is true, all the three, form into one great complex sentence. The first sentence ends with the predicate Kāṇāḷ (காணாள்) "she sees not"—in line 22. (Really it is "she saw not". We use the historic present). This portion refers to the rains, the reading of the good omen by the women for inspiring the disheartened heroine, with confidence; and the failure of this attempt. A suggestive simile based on ancient mythology opens the poem.

(Lord Māyōṉ-Māal—the Dark, the Great, the Magician or the Wonder worker goes a-begging as an unsuspected dwarf to the great tyrant Mahābali, ostensibly for three feet of land). "Immediately (Mahābali) pours the water (into the hands of the dwarf) lo! (the dwarf of a Māal) develops into huge proportions, encompassing the wide expanse of this world (for measuring away the whole Universe with two strides) turning to the right—this Māal ever supporting the Goddess of wealth with his encircling hand bearing the imprints of (greatness and divinity) the Conch and the Wheel. The cloud, similarly (first small in stature forming itself a nucleus for the ions to gather round it at the very touch of) the water drunk (i.e. evaporating) from the sea of the thundering roar usually cool to its depth, (now cooling down from its erstwhile heat by this evaporation) assumes huge proportions, soars up high (to quench, in a magical way, the sunburnt heat), and sweeping to the right, encompasses the broad expanse of the vacant space of this earth. It (charges, takes possession of and) hangs over a peak (in a strategic position, to open its attack—perhaps to freeze) and rushes with cruel speed and pours down in heavy torrents, its rain. It is now a lingering desolate dusk of a rainy evening".

The description of the ancient ceremony of deciphering the omens—the divination of the future by the first word heard at the place chosen, follows:

"The women of respect, grown old in these ceremonies, go to the suburb of this ancient well guarded city, unapproachable (to the enemies). They strew the paddy and the beautiful and fragrant Mullai carried in a measuring vessel, the Mullai just blooming afresh out of the buds with the bees humming like the harp. They stand in a reverential mood (expecting a speech in any unexpected quarter, revealing to them the future to come, in relation to what they have in mind). (There comes) a shepherd-lass clasping hard with her crossed hands, her shivering shoulders. She sees the suffering calves, tethered to short ropes, going round and round, full of an ever-increasing oppressive feeling and perplexed anxiety, 'Mothers will be coming, presently led from behind, by the shepherds of the bent and cruel staff' —thus she speaks endearingly to them."

The reading of this omen and the failure of this whole attempt follow :—

" 'This well meaning good word have we heard' say the women. 'The verbal omens of the innocent, are always unfailing. Therefore, the verbal omens sought out by the confidants of the king before his march are confirmed as forecasting good. The coming of the Lord, amassing tributes from his foes on the frontier and bringing his military action to a successful finish, is sure to happen here and now. Thou of the mango hue (i.e. of the colour of the mango sprout! or Thou pale with the grief of separation). Away (uproot) with your misgivings and sufferings.' Thus she is shown and shown (but the explanations like these carry no conviction). She sees not (eye to eye with them)."

What follows, really, belongs to the second part of the poem but is given here. This must go to the very end of the second part because it is the complement of the verb "she sees not" in line 80. Here hangs a story of interpretation which will be told later on.

"Her collyrium-fed eyes are like the fully blossomed blue lily. But, now, from them trickle down isolated tear-drops of pearls"—"she sees not."

II

The next sentence beginning from the 22nd line ends with another "kāṇāḷ" as its predicate in the 80th line. This des-

cribes the hero's camp on the battlefield, starting from the very beginning of its construction, perhaps in concentric circles, leading up from the exterior to the interior central tent of the king, turning next to take us to its midnight silence and fatigue, and finally closing down with the description of the depression and despondency of the king, and the isolation of his apartment, and with the final relief he gets amidst victorious drums.

"It is a long belt of a broad jungle tract, embraced by the (motherly) forest stream. The green bushes along with the Piṭavu trees wont to emit their fragrance far and wide—(alas) —are cut and destroyed. The fortresses with small hole-like entrances, of the hunters (of the enemies' frontier) are razed to the ground. The living thorns of the forests are carefully gathered and this (improvised) rampart of heaped-up thorns encircles the camps as a great protection. The camps spread there everywhere, like the noisy waves of the sea. The streets are straight with the well aligned roofs of leaves. In the open, at the junction of four branching roads, stands the small-eyed elephant, with its honey (must) oozing cheeks. It refuses to eat the sweet leaves grown in the fields (of the Liquorice plant) and the tall majestic sugar-canes, bound together with the sheaves of paddy. It brushes its forehead (with this luxurious offering) taking it with its trunk, twisting it on to its tusk, ending sharp like the spears. The unlettered youths, learned in no other art, go on repeating (teaching) the words of a northern language and make it eat the food-balls, with the help of a forked instrument (the goad)."

From these exterior quarters of the soldiers, the poem goes to the interior quarters of the chieftains and the king. "Like the orange coloured cloth left to dry on the triple staff of the Brahmin recluse, wearing his clothes dyed in red ochre, the quivers are made to hang on the forceful bows never running away from a righteous war. Tents are (thus) pitched and the ropes are drawn up (to be knotted up in good tension). Round this mansion of a tent, the spears with their heads full of flower designs, are planted; and the shields are arranged (and fixed up) in a row. With this fortress of encircling bows as a strong fortification, in the midst of the varied, multi-tongued, numerous huge army, stands separate-

ly by common consent (the king's apartment), formed with the (beautiful) pieces of painted cloth encircling the long posts."

"Here appear the girls (between 12 and 13 years of age) of the long-tress-covered tiny napes, and bracelet-bedecked forearms, wearing on their many coloured breast-bands, the bright swords of firm hilts glistening away the night into day. These carry the oiling can (attached to the wick tube) the long wicks being kept ready, well lighted, and with these they light the dying lamps arranged there in rows. The peals of the clapper of the lustrous bell have died away (after the camp work for the day has come to a close). It is midnight. The adjacent bushes overgrown with creepers blooming with wild but white jasmine (Atiral) sway with the wafting wind, laden with the sprays of rain. Like these, the trusted Royal Body-guards of the highest rank grown grey in service wrapped up in white dress, at its top, knotted up into a turban, go on their rounds in their sleep-fatigued but majestic gait, keeping a careful vigil. The servants (mākkaḷ—as distinguished from professors *makkaḷ* of astronomy) knowing the time quantitatively by measuring it correctly and never going wrong, offer their obeisance and salutation to the king with joined hands, hailing him openly and distinctly with the benediction of a long life; and declare unto him, 'Thou who goeth for conquering the world of the dashing waves! The time according to your hour glass of water scarce, is thus much.' "

After this midnight vigil, the poem leads us on to the innermost heart of the royal apartment, inside the camp.

"The comfortable royal retreat with all its grandeur of artistic arrangements hangs on the tiger-shaped chains. This is all the handiwork of the fearless Ionians of sturdy frame, appearing frightful in their robes, the tightfitting dress at the waist bulging up to cover within its fold the engirdling whip. The reflecting light of the beautiful crystals shows up everything to view. The strong rope (cunningly) draws out the screen in a circle and creates thereby a room within a room. (In the innermost recess of this heart of the camp) stand close to the king (outside his bedchamber) only the barbarians slipping into their robes with a speechless tongue, speaking with their bodies."

The feeling of depression and despondency is developed.

"The King goes in. He, however, gets no sleep, being over-powered by the intense desire for (a further) offensive war. The elephants full of their petrifying wounds of piercing javelins, thrown at them with force and speed, now standing oblivious of their (loving) groups of cow-elephants, come before his mind. (Before this scene closes, rush past his mind) the thoughts of those who had wrestled and killed such huge elephants. He contemplates on those valiant heroes who have left for good, this world (taking with them all heroism and gratitude), leaving us the poorer for the same, hewing down the elephants' bulky trunks, to quake like the rock snake (in its gasp of death), setting aright their honey bubbling wreath so as to become their laurels of victory, and laying down in that very act of heroism, their lives, in grateful recognition of the royal food (running in every one of their veins). He ponders over the horse with the sharp edged arrow piercing through its armour of leather, and getting itself imbedded into its body, throwing down its ears to droop (no more to be cocked up as a veritable sign of its valour and life) dragging on its life with excruciating pain and refusing even to eat any food. The king rests his hand on the bed and the armlet of the other hand is pressed to his crown. He cogitates for long. With his sturdy fingers wont to hold the weapons aimed at the enemies, he sets aright the drooping wreath of lustrous glory into the form of the laurel of righteous wholesome victory. Sovereignty sits shivering. The green camp of leaves resounds with the triumphant drum. She has known her lord as the denizen of the world of sweet sleep. She, at that moment, does not see him thus.

III

The third and the last sentence begins at line 80. Its first part describes the lady in suspense. With a rhetorical inversion the predicate precedes the subject, "All through her ears neighed joyfully the home coming horses." The predicate "neighed joyfully", "Ālina" occurs in line 89; and the subject (horses) at the very end of the poem, really the very last word of the line 103. Amidst the suspense, wells up the sudden joy. The poet elaborately describes the return of the hero from the battlefield, with all haste, through the glorious

forest rejuvenated by the rains—all so suggestive of love. The queen's condition before arrival is first described.

"In her suffering of this distress, she has guided her mind on its way to her lord. The distant mind, now no more being there, to share the burden of her secrets, within herself, the feeling of desolation kills the (natural) resistance of her mental equilibrium. She all alone, ponders for long and consoles herself (with the thoughts of encouragement). She sets aright the falling bangles. She feels confused, and qucikly heaves up a deep sigh. She trembles like the arrow-hit peacock. (She gives up all efforts). The jewels slip down. The lamp of the lady form glows to burning heat with its sumptuous flame. The place is magnificent. Lofty and high, grows the seven storeyed palace, (perhaps, in the sudden flash of a lightning). Through the bending valley of the roof, falls steep down the rolling torrents (of collected rain water). She is lying there (recovering after frustration) intensely listening to its resonant music of many a sweet tune (and to something deeper through it all, with which possibly her heart vibrates in unison). They (the horses) made the tumultous joyful noise of pompous sonority, filling up and resonating all through the innermost recesses of her ears."

This is the happy climax and consummation of the poem, resolving, the complication of the climax of suspense which precedes it. This tumult of excitement and exhilaration is made to spread everywhere, so as to restore the poetic emotional equilibrium. The final canorous joy is shown to be slowly but steadily developing all through the footsteps of the hero from the battlefield to his sweet home. This is the concluding portion, forming in grammatical structure the merest complement of the subject. We go back and start from the camp, on the return march.

"There is his swarming crowd of a huge army, rushing to follow him. Having conquered and annexed as they liked, the banner of victory has been raised aloft to the sounding of the conches and trumpets. With a turn to the right they march home. On the soft tiny sands the Kāyā (காயா Iron wood tree) of the dense leaves blooms its collyrium. The koṉṟai (கொன்றை Indian laburnum) with bunches of sprouts and flowers throws forth all its good pure gold. The conical closing buds of the Kōṭal (கோடல் White Malabar glory lily)

open up their palms. The bouquets of Tōṉṟi (தோன்றி Red Malabar glory lily) blossom into blood. In this sprouting forest runs the royal road of red earth. Blessed with the timely rain, the ears of the millet droop down with their weight. The reindeer of the twisted horn with its young love, frisks and darts forth amidst those grains. This is the month when the erstwhile white clouds which had marched in the opposite directions, pour down their showers. The hero leaves behind the jungle overgrown with the ripening root of vaḷḷi (வள்ளி convolvulus batatas) plant. (The fast movement of the chariot makes the forest appear to recede). He comes post-haste quickening the pace of the fast running gallop of the horses. The horses adorning the lofty chariot of the crystal clear artistic perfection-joyfully neigh or make the joyful neighing of the pompous sonarity of the tumultuous joy of safe return—the sound that fills up the ears of the queen."

CHAPTER III

INTERPRETATIONS

I

To the commentators, the interpretation of this poem has become a problem—a hard nut to crack. According to them, Mullai is heroine's remaining at home, doing as a chaste wife, what she was told, patiently waiting for the hero's return on the appointed day, attending to the humdrum duties, without making any fuss about his absence, much less crying over it. This is the conception of their chastity; and chastity is another word for Mullai. On the face of it, this poem appears diametrically opposed to this conception. Here the queen weeps, trembles and sighs. She becomes pale and lean. The jewels slip away. She lies prostrate. The companions are alarmed. They go to read the omens and return with words of encouragement. But these are of no avail. His return alone can save her. How is this to be reconciled with the conception of Mullai?

This is the problem that the great commentator Naccinārkkiniyar sets up before him to solve. He interprets all these symptoms of despair, as referring to the day of separation when the heroine gets an inkling of a doubt that the hero may be leaving her. The reading of the verbal omen also refers to that period when the companions try to reconcile her to the necessity of his certain victorious march. It is said "They show and show"; that is "they explain and explain." Why this repetition? They explain first his fame, his greatness and prowess sure to bring victory, his very greatness and fame urging him on to take up this burden. Secondly, they explain to her the greatness of the enemies who can be conquered only by this hero, his very sense of honour driving him to defend against them and his very greatness driving him to increase his fame.

The commentator makes the first portion of the poem, a very long prologue; and he makes the best of the bargain. There are, according to other commentators, two references to the verbal omen, in two adjacent lines evidently referring to two different occasions. One refers to the omen deciphered

by the warriors on their first march, which certainly must have taken place at the time of separation. The second divination is said to be by the women and the speaker of the poem perhaps a companion (she, by the way, refers to the women in the third person, evidently including herself among them), states that she has heard of the other verbal omen also. If there is then a suggestion to the divination at the time of the hero's initial start, why not the major portion of the poem be referred to this initial starting period itself? Therefore, the commentator throws back everything including the divination, to the period of preparation for war, when for convincing the heroine of the inevitable march of victory the women go out to read the future. The interpretation of Naccinārkkiniyar is too confusing to be followed at this stage and therefore, without prejudicing his case, it shall be given a little later.

The sighing and the weeping, the feeling of depression and desolation, the quaking and confusion, all, therefore, go back to the preparatory stage of the march, instead of coming immediately before the return of the king. There are two phrases confirming the commentator's conception of Mullai. It is said, in one place, that she ponders over, for a very long time. It must be assumed, according to the commentator, that thus she consoles herself with steadying thoughts about his words and her duty as a chaste wife. This phrase gives Naccinārkkiniyar the magic key to unlock the puzzle of a poem. This phrase implies that she suffers no more. The line 88, describing her lying, whilst the evening lamps burn bright on her cot, expecting him on a rainy evening—the very evening described in the beginning lines of the poem—gives us the very incarnation of this spirit of Mullai, that is the very heart of this poem.

II

There are insuperable difficulties in the way of this kind of interpretation. The tone of despair, if it is a tone of despair at all, continues right up to the end of the 84th line out of the 103 lines of this poem. The sheet anchor of Naccinārkkiniyar appears only in one line No. 82 in between the other lines and even in that line, in between other phrases, expressive of despair. But at the sight of his magic wand of inter-

pretation, these textual difficulties disappear into thin air, at least as far as Naccinārkkiniyar is concerned. Here comes in his theory of Māṭṭu or linkage, governing the interpretation of long poems.

The ten idylls are admittedly very long poems where the ideas and sentences roll on for any great length. And the ideas and phrases coming at great distances, for instance in the beginning or end or middle especially when the long poem is looked upon as one single sentence, have to be brought together by throwing out as many links as possible. This is linkage or 'Māṭṭu' (மாட்டு) in poetry as described by Tolkāppiyar. This explains the poetic necessity for bringing together remoter and nearer phrases into one continuous unity of a sentence and a poem. But how to take away the phrases from their natural setting in poetry? For instance, this very 82nd line looks like enumerating certain states of mental despondency, connecting them all with the conjunction "and" (உம் um) added to every word, the same conjunction being found added to the words occurring in subsequent lines of despair. How to tear one line, rather one phrase away from its context?

His reply is the magic word Māṭṭu or the poetical necessity of linkage referred to. He is to a certain extent encouraged by the usage in every language where the prose order differs from the poetic order of words. In Tamil, in addition, there are some artificial orders of words, in curious exercises of versification such as Koṇṭū kūṭṭu, Moḻi māṟṟu, Niral niṟai and Cuṇṇam. These verses are very much out of the ordinary, indulged in very rare moments, to cause perplexity and wonder—but let it be marked—only within the very limited span of two lines as admitted by Naccinārkkiniyar (Tol. 888) or four lines, according to Pavaṇantiyār (Nannūl: 411) and no more, and this is done in casual playful and occasional stanzas of very small dimensions like conundrums and acrostics. This kind of construction cannot certainly occur in long drawn poems of poetic beauty and artistic perfection. Tolkāppiyar who uses this term linkage, by definition, cannot be thinking of this playful inversions indulged in leisure time versifying hobbies, for his longer poems; for, it is clearly beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he never equates Cuṇṇam etc., with Māṭṭu.

III

This commentator is not standing alone in following this way of interpretation. There is before him leading the way, Pērāciriyar, another great commentator on Tolkāppiyam. Therefore, this theory is that of a school of thought and not that of an individual, though Naccinārkkiniyar represents the best exponent of this theory of interpretation. A great scholar of Sanskrit as he is, he is probably misled by what is happening in Sanskrit. There, in that classical language, without any reference to the order of their occurrence, words may be made to go, link and align themselves along with others, anywhere in the poem. This is possible in all the fully inflected or synthetic languages. The suffixes give the morphological meaning; and words ending in the same suffix, go together as complements of each other wherever they may be placed in a poem. In the synthetic languages not only the noun or subject but also its complements like the adjectives and verbal nouns put in apposition, are inflected. Therefore, the adjective need not precede the noun nor the adverb its verb. The suffixes give the clue for assembling the words in groups of connected meaning. The particular place a word occupies is not of significance in these languages. It is very doubtful whether we have any such language where the place a word occupies is absolutely immaterial; for, usage fixes the place by repetition through the ages.

Whatever that may be, the Tamil language, inspite of its inflections, is not of that character. The place a word occupies in a sentence fixes its meaning in all analytical languages like Tamil and English. In the sentence "Rāma kills Rāvaṇa" or "The potter makes the vessel" the place alone decides whether a noun is the subject or object or the logical predicate. The place a word occupies in a sentence is equal to the suffixes like case-sign etc., giving the necessary morphological signification. In short, in Tamil as in English the place of a word is to be counted as a morpheme.

It is very unfortunate that this great commentator who has realised the unique greatness of Tamil language and literature, who looks upon Tolkāppiyar as a great Vēdic Ṛṣi (Tol. Introduction and Subject—Poruḷ) who fights for the Tamil origin of all the words found in Tolkāppiyar (70), has missed the vital distinction between the synthetic language like San-

skrit and the fastly developing analytical language like Tamil. Perhaps, in his enthusiasm to prove that Tamil is as capable of varied interpretations as Sanskrit, he has fallen into this snare. It must be said to the credit of this great scholar that more than anybody else, he is conscious of his strained, forced and artificial interpretation; but his justification is that this is made necessary by the tradition of the Caṅkam age and other difficulties of textual criticism as explained at the commencement of this Commentary on Mullai-p-pāṭṭu itself. He has woven a theory of his own on this basis, because he feels the poems cannot be otherwise explained as conforming to established standards of Tolkāppiyam and the conventions of the Caṅkam literature.

IV

What is the impression created by this kind of interpretation? There lies before us a valuable saree of silk and gold of a beautiful pattern and there comes a tailor, perhaps not understanding the pattern; he tears away the silk and gold threads to bits, to piece them together in an artistic pattern of his own. There are not tailors wanting in modern times who will cut the cloth to pieces and stitch them to desired shapes, where the original straight bands will form in their hands into angles and other curious shapes. In all these cases they do not take the cloth as a finished product of art but as raw material on which they have to impress their own art. Surely, the poem lies there in its artistic perfection—complete and satisfying, requiring nothing more to be desired or done. It is not a stone or a metal to be chiselled and polished into the required shape; much less a cloth to be torn and stitched to the desired form or fashion. It is a perfection of art standing or falling by its absolute poetic value. Any suggested improvement or tampering with it, is vandalism pure and simple.

V

If one concludes Naccinārkkiniyar is taking too much liberties with the poem, a much more formidable obstacle of incongruity of the name of Mullai faces one. If one is to condemn the author and the poem, one goes for the highest disappointment of life and will be charged with the grossest impertinence and irreverence. If that however is the truth, any sacrifice is worthy of the cause of truth, in this age of

Gāndhism and Satyāgraha. But, fortunately that exigency does not arise. The late lamented leader of the purist Tamil movement, Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ, has given a new interpretation following the order of the words of the poem, without mangling it in any way. In fairness to Naccinārkkiniyar it must be confessed that this is the interpretation he attacks.

VI

Even here, Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ in addition to his rebuttal of the charge brought home by Naccinārkkiniyar against other ways of interpretation, throws a few suggestions for a more harmonious interpretation. The lines 82 and 84 are reinterpreted by him and we may elaborate this idea. The heroine ponders for long (over her duty as a chaste wife and waits patiently for the hero's return as told by him) and she finds consolation in this encouraging thought. She therefore sets aright the bangles which are slipping away because of her emaciated body till now attacked by the corrosive grief. But all of a sudden, after this grief, she may not be at peace with herself. Reasoning is different from belief and action. What ought to be done is something different from what is done. "To know is to do" but only in slow degrees. The colourless thought at first painful, when it goes against the grain of our feeling, must soak through and through our personality to be aglow with the multicoloured emotions moving us to activity. Immediately, therefore, after the thought of the duty, there is a struggle going on in her mind between reason and her emotion. She gets confused, she sighs and trembles. In this internal conflict, the jewels slip away. Finally, she lays herself down on her bed and awaits with all her ears the homecoming of the hero.

As for the general charge that the feeling of despair will colour the whole poem if it is interpreted as it runs, Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ's answer is that as long as the closing portion is free from the contamination by despair, it cannot destroy the Mullai effect of patient forbearance. According to him, except in the line No. 23 referring to the heroine's tears, there is no suggestion of despair. Perhaps he equates despair or 'sōka rasa' with tears; possibly because Tolkāppiyar refers to it, under the name 'Aḻukai' or Tears. Bursting into tears is the climax of 'sōka rasa' but there can be many stages lead-

ing on to it. Nor is it correct to say that there is only one single reference to the tears; for, it is the climax; one does not expect it to be repeated in every line. Even on his own interpretation, the feeling of despair reigns supreme, to start with, in the poem; then later on, on his own showing it continues to struggle for supremacy with her feeling of chastity only to yield to the latter its victory and to disappear in the end. This picture of his, thus, shows that the heroine has not achieved the self-surrender. Where is here the glorious vision of perfect chastity of Mullai? Is it contended that the theme of the poem is the development of chastity and not its completed perfection? This apart, he has suggested that despair comes only in the absence of any one to console, and not as here where there are people to console and bring relief. Grief shared, according to him, is grief conquered. 'Neytal' is indeed despair and desolation. But this feeling may arise not only in the presence of the companion but also, even in the company of the beloved himself—not to speak of the company of the friends as in Akam 120 and a host of other poems. Mere physical presence does not give the experience of a sharing. Even in this very poem the climax of despair or 'sōka' is reached by the helpless heroine in tears, in the very presence and inspite of the trusted attendants of age and sympathy, consoling her all round.

VII

If the old commentator relies on his sheet anchor, the solitary phrase 'Nīṭu Niṉaintu' in line 82 *(நீடு நினைந்து)* the new commentator builds his edifice on the bedrock of that very same line but on the whole of that line rather than any single phrase therein, all for the purpose of justifying their conception of 'Mullai' "Chastity is not to say anything against the word of the Lord" *(கற்பெனப் படுவது சொல் திறம்பாமை)*. Even as we have attempted to explain their ideas in our own words, it is possible—and it is necessary when we come to explain the mystic value of this poem—to present their conception of Mullai, though they do not even hint at it, as a theory of self-surrender, of the conquest of the smaller self, thereby raising this erotic poetry to the highest spiritual level of final Release and Divine experience. In that case, this self-surrender though blossoming

fully at one particular moment, in line 80, appearing as it were as a sudden conversion, is really a slow process of spiritual development. This poem itself may be taken to represent this mental evolution starting from the revolt of the passions against duty; their tumultuous outburst of tears, slowly being put down by the awakening sense of duty and evolving self-surrender. For a time there is a suspense; there is a confusion of the black chamber as the mystic say when the struggle between the conflicting forces is at its highest. There is the absolute surrender or prostration. The inner voice is heard as a distant whisper and there is an intense listening. The sudden vision—the final experience of the Prince coming back to the bride—the actual hearing of the home-coming hero and his horse—comes with all the force of a conversion and beatitude, the glorious victory of the song thus expanding into the Universal and the Absolute.

But unfortunately, this is not the conception of Mullai that the commentators hold forth. Theirs is the idea of obedience—perhaps a willing obedience but all the same a mere passivity; a glorification of the man's superiority, throwing out its reflection inside the heart of the submissive and obedient wife. Even if it is assumed that this development is implied in the poem, the reader's mind is perturbed by the lack of coherence or want of progressive evolution. The steps if we follow according to the new commentator become out of tune with this growing tempo. The heroine is all tears in line 23; in line 80, (which gives his reference to her) the heroine does not find the hero by her side, the hero who sleeps at that moment happily with no further care, inside his camp on the battlefield. This hankering after the physical embrace should be the starting point of the mental progress; it can never be the spiritual stage following the climax of tears. The physical passion, the mental agony, the despair and helpless tears—the steadying thought of obedience, the conflict of duty with passion, the final resolution in the joy of union—that ought to be the course followed by this mental evolution. Coming immediately after the tears, this feeling of his absence from the bed, creates a revolting sense of bathos, rather than a poignant mood of pathos. It may be possible to explain away this disorder or false step in the

mental evolution by assuming a kind of mental imbalance resulting from the mental agony bursting into tears. The heroine in tears forgets everything: She sees not, hears not, what the companions say: her mind becomes a perfect blank as far as the immediate memory goes. In all such cases of mental shock, the memory of the past is green. The unconscious mind removes the thorn of present memory and inspires her with the joy of the remote past. She feels she is sleeping with her lord as of old. The thought may be thus deceived but not the physical sense of touch except in case of real lunacy. Her hands stretched in passionate embrace meet with mortifying disappointment. Interpreted this way, this will be the real climax of despair. This ill-suits the theory of Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ that there, there is no more than one reference to despair or Neytal (23).

VIII

The commentators who have realised that its feeling, whether it be Neytal i.e. desperate desolation or Mullai i.e. patient obedience, counts for everything in this poem, fail to consider its development from a psychological point of view. What is meant by psychology is not the dry psychology of abstract science but the living psychology of poetic experience. Poems are the incarnations of 'Rasa' or the feelings and their criticism or appreciation; Poetry is the very embodiment of emotion, as emotion recollected in tranquillity, its 'Rasa' or sentiment as the very life of poety—"Rasātmakam Kāvyam"—this is too well known to this land of Ānandavardhanāchārya.

Naccinārkkiniyar's commentary may be considered from this point of view. According to him, the poem introduces us to the rainy season which forms the background of the final action referred to in line 85 onwards. There, the heroine, lies in passionate expectation on the cot intently listening for the bustle of his arrival whilst the lamps lighted at dusk on this rainy evening burn (hopefully) with (increased) brilliance. In between this opening and ending comes first the portrayal of the heroine as she is immediately before the king starts on his march and secondly the description of his camp. The latter will be taken up later on separately. As for the former, the old commentator imagines a story of his own. The

numbers within brackets herein below refer to the numbers of the lines in the poem and at a glance at these numbers the theory of interpretation adopted by this commentator, stands revealed.

The heroine is lying on the bed along with her beloved lord. But she finds he is not enjoying the sweet sleep. She is reminded of the past when he had gone away on his victorious march led by his own mind as it liked (81). She is afraid that this will happen again and hence feels desolate, losing all control over herself (81). She becomes feeble and has to prevent the bangles from falling (82). Her head reels in confusion. She sighs quickly and deeply (83). She trembles like the peacock mortally wounded by an arrow, and loses the control over her body itself, so much so, the jewels slip away (84). (Now begins the reign of his theory). She feels helpless in tears (28). The hero seeing her state feels depressed (80) and is convinced that she cannot bear his separation (82). He decides upon convincing her before starting (82). The old women of her retinue come to his rescue. They (11) speak to her of the reading of the omen by the trusted people of the army, before marching on the enemies—they have themselves heard the very verbal omen (11-18-10-11-17-18-13-14-12-18-16). Therefore (17) everything will happen as the heroine and her attendants desire. He will win and come back soon (20) as on this successful return depends her domestic life (18). It is the best that can be thought of; "away with your hesitations and consequent sufferings" (20 and 21)—they tell her. She ponders over this and thinks that his government cannot function without this separation from her (81-82). Thus she patiently waits till the appointed time of the rainy season anxiously awaiting his return (82-88). And he returns and the joyful bustle of his return resonates in her ear (89-103).

IX

Even if this interpretation were to be the correct one, what is the resulting impression of the poem? The major portion of the poem except for the two phrases 'Nīṭu Ninaintu' *(நீடு நினைந்து)* pondering over and convinced of the necessity for his departure—"Ōrppanaḷ Kiṭantōḷ *(ஓர்ப்பனள் கிடந்தோள்)* (she who lay patiently expecting him to come

as promised by him) describes the feeling of separation growing into one of despair and desolation, in the presence of the king himself. A simple mathematical calculation gives us the resulting picture more forcibly than any poetical criticism. Out of the 412 feet (103 lines into 4 feet per line) four feet alone express complete confidence and perfect obedience. The second phrase "Ōrppaṉaḷ Kiṭantōḷ" (ஓர்ப்பனள் கிடந்தோள்) coming as the final portrait of the heroine and having the form of a finite verb though it has been deverbalised into a noun, may because of its peculiar position in the poem, bear all the burden of the Commentators' interpretation. Not so the casual phrase 'Nīṭu Niṉaintu' which has no specific marks, external or internal, about it so as to be taken apart and glorified as the expression of Mullai. The transformation of the feeling of the past despair into that of the present contentment is not at all explicitly stated; nor implicitly hinted beyond a doubt. According to this commentator, this 'Nīṭu Niṉaintu' also refers to what occurs on the eve of the hero's departure, the final resolution of the scene of suffering; therefore it has nothing to do with the patient obedience of the heroine, after the hero has left. Therefore one is left only with the solitary phrase 'Ōrppaṉaḷ Kiṭantōḷ' (ஓர்ப்பனள் கிடந்தோள்). It is only suffering and despair that are well impressed in our mind when we read through this poem even as interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar. Inspite of all the trouble taken by him, his criticism of the other interpretations, is equally applicable to his own. He is not successful in his attempts to save 'Mullai' from 'Pālai' and 'Neytal' overshadowing and eclipsing it.

X

The poem, however, does not stop with this despair. The bustle of the return thrills her. The poem instead of closing as a poem of separation (Pālai) or desolation (Neytal) escapes from their eclipse and concludes in all its grandeur as a song of joyous reunion. Though the commentator has not touched on this point, one may consider the poem from this aspect as well.

The method of contrast is not the monopoly of the inductive logician; it is equally the method of poets. In describing the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, or Cūrapaṉmaṉ and

Murukaṉ, the poets have elaborately described the valour and equipments of the invincible villains. Even in the absence of a description of the nature and nurture of the heroes their portraits of valour will become painted in glorious colours by their very act of conquering the villains. The ball thrown at the wall very forcibly rebounds with equal force without any more action on our part. The height to which the counter hero is raised, at his fall, collapses as it were and falls with a force which by itself sends up the hero to the same height on the opposite direction, without any further activity on anyone's part. This is indeed, a short cut poetic method, utilising if we may say so, the Newton's third law of motion in poetry.

But the villain's fall is always worked up slowly, as something inevitable because of fate or because of a defect in character or because of poetic justice. Therefore, the crash when it comes is not something unexpected. In a similar way from the depth of despondency must spring to the usual height, the height of joy. But has the reader been prepared in Mullai-p-pāṭṭu for this, in no uncertain terms, beyond the words and thoughts of consolation? Probably the description of the battle is intended as some such development though Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar does not specifically assert thus. There also, the king is in the slough of despondency. If that were so, where could there be any expectation of immediate return springing up in the reader's mind? The return will be much more sudden than expected. The old commentator, therefore, makes this despondency refer to the defeated king and not to the hero. His interpretation of this portion may be relevant here. Even in describing the camp the old commentator, does not follow the order of the words in the poem as is made clear by the numbers of the lines (after the phrases or sentences translated). This is his version of the story:

In the widespread camp (28) the (captured) enemy king (79) resting one of his hands on the bed (75) and supporting with the other hand his head (76), thinks (72) of the elephant (69), of the horses (74) and the dead warriors (72). He ponders over them all and shudders at the thought of the hero's camp resounding with the victorious drum. In that field camp in the midst of the huge army of the multifarious linguistic divisions (43) a separate apartment for the king is

decided upon and is improvised with painted screens (44) and tiger shaped chains of the Yavanas. Inside there, the hour glass is read and the time is announced (58). Therefore, the girls (47) with the lights point the way (63). The king enters the screened interior. The youths feed the elephants (36). The people of the oiling can light the dying lamps (49). The body-guards go round on their vigil (54). The dumb barbarians alone are near him. The bells have been silenced (50). Even in the midnight, the king gets no sleep (67). Next day, he (wins) (89) and sets right his laurel (78). He annexes others' lands (90). The banner of victory is raised (91). The forest is left behind (101). On the royal road the conches are blown and trumpets sounded (82). The armies rush back behind him (90) (to keep pace with him). He quickens the space of the fast running horse (102). The horses of his chariot (103) make the noise of happy return (89) which resounds in the heroine's ear.

It will be seen that the first indication of victory appears in line 78. The first explicit and definite reference to victory occurs in line 89, after the poem has described the explosive joy of reunion, immediately following the long-drawn desolation. If this were so, there could be no preparation for the explosion. How can there be any retrospective preparation? The latter half of the line 89 cannot prepare us for what went before, in its former half. This commentator in another place uses the phrase 'Nalintu Poruḷ Koḷḷutal' *(நலிந்து பொருள் கொள்ளுதல்)* or forced construction, to such interpretations like these, necessitated by the principle of consistency with the rules and conventions (See his commentary on the last cūtram of Nūṉmarapu in Eḻuttatikāram of Tolkāppiyam). Therefore, to say the least, this interpretation is artificial; and even then, it does not succeed in its attempt.

CHAPTER IV

THE DILEMMA OF THE INTERPRETATIONS

I

Coming to the new commentary, there also one finds the joy of return disclosed all of a sudden. Further, there is no need to repeat our remarks on the various stages of the mental development traced by this commentator. He has laid down a dictum of criticism that in the midst of a sentiment another sentiment may intervene, though it ought not to supervene or interfere with the other. It is here, that the distinction between the unvarying but developing main sentiment or a 'Rasa' and the contrasting but varying 'bhāvas' or emotions becomes of importance. The 'aṅga Rasa' and 'aṅgin Rasa' have to be distinguished. In a plate of a delicious sweet, there may have been added a pinch of salt; in a dish of savoury there may have been added a spoon of sugar; in a cup of sweet syrup there may have been a few grains of citric acid. In all these cases so long as the main taste is not spoiled, these ingredients of other tastes add to the delicacy and relish of the main taste. So also in a poem, other emotions may come in without interfering with the main sentiment, without producing any jarring note, but really heightening the enjoyment and effect of the main sentiment.

II

Poets here also work by the method of contrast. Rāma and Sīta sauntering along the meandering Gōdāvari each seeking the reflection of the other in Nature stand as embodiments of the emotion of love and joy (sringāra Rasa). The blood curdling duel with the Virātaṉ succeeds and this frightful encounter is heightened by this contrast. This is, however, a ticklish problem, as is made clear by the interpretations of the famous "Door knocking scene" in the play of Macbeth pitched in a lighter vein immediately after the ghastly murder of the innocent king. Many a critic had heard a jarring note here, till De Quincey who enjoyed it with all his heart, explained his experience that this scene in the lighter vein instead of interfering with the tragic significance intervenes by contrast to relieve us of our tension reaching its climax in the murder scene and to remind us of the great

truth that the world at large is continuing as of old, a truth one is likely to forget amidst tragic surroundings.

Everything depends on our receptive mood ready to be immersed in the poetic flood, ourselves offering no artificial resistance of private prejudice or false theory. If we thus allow ourselves to resonate in unison with the main tone of this Mullai-p-pāṭṭu, we feel at first the benumbing prostration of the slowly developing feeling of despair and finally the sudden rush of the feeling of explosive joy. It is not a question of contrast but a story of their conflict and resolution or rather a story of the quick succession of both the feelings. Such a conflict may be visualised but, as already hinted, there are suggested in such an interpretation some false steps throwing the whole song out of tune especially the reference to the heroine not seeing the hero by her side on the cot.

There is one other way of fusing the otherwise jarring sentiments. The Buddhists and the Jains developed to a certain extent this peculiar feature of poetry—a moral seriousness reminding us of the market place where customers examine the commodities by turning them inside out. Old poetry speaks of this as 'Paimmaṟiyā-p-pārttal'. The torn bits of cloth are stitched together with a deceiving and attractive cover to form a beautiful hand-bag for women. Intending purchasers therefore examine it inside out. The other worldly philosophers make use of the same method in decrying the things of this world. The beautiful face of beauty and symmetry is turned inside out and is revealed as the revolting padding of fat. The modern readers are familiar with the urban disillusionment and ironical dramatisation in Eliot's Poetry on 'Cooked Eggs' etc., where widely different emotions and feelings are contrasted and fused. For instance the whisper first suggests the whisper of the mantra of religious awe and then the whisper of intrigue. What else is the life of such suggestive pictures as Rudrākṣa-p-pūṉai except this fusion of the various contradictory levels of experience?

The conflict of emotions may come and pass away creating a beautiful situation. Lord Śiva appears in the form of an old sage to Pārvatī and indulges in a tirade against Śiva, her beloved; Pārvatī is so much provoked that she becomes the very form of righteous indignation; she is about to turn and leave the place, when seeing the old man suddenly transform-

ed into her loving Lord, there is an uprising of love from her heart to her angry brow and to the whole of her body till now rigid with red anger, now softening and melting away into a mellifluous passion. Here is a beautiful picture of the conflicting emotions given by Kāḷidāsa. In 'Naṭuṅka Nāṭṭam' (நடுங்க நாட்டம்) of Akapporuḷ we get the same conflict of fear with joy where the mention by the companion of an impending danger to the Lord, the beloved turns pale and shudders whilst the closing words of the companion describing the victory of the Hero make her suddenly beam with joy.

Does Mullai-p-pāṭṭu represent any such conflict? Its name in such a case ought to have been "Neytal mullai" or "Mullai-p-pālai." There is, however, no doubt that the main sentiment of Mullai-p-pāṭṭu is the feeling of joyful union. That is the final climax of the poem. Can we say that the feeling of separation and despair developed all through the major portion of the poem is only an incidental emotion just to throw into greater relief the final joy of reunion. How is this miracle effected by the poet inspite of his elaboration of the feeling of despondency?

III

Is there any preparation for receiving the explosion, hinted at by the new commentator in his explanation? Does he feel that the description of the battle-field serves this purpose?—these questions arise at this stage, in our minds. He however, looks upon the graphic delineation of the camp life as a method of keeping us in suspense as a means of elaborating the poem, rather than as a way of preparing us to expect the final explosion of joy. He definitely states that this part of the poem is unnecessarily elaborating the details without gripping the attention and interest of the reader, thus laying his critical hand on what he considers to be a weak spot in this poem.

He does not, like Naccinārkkiniyar, explain away the picture of despondency taking form in these lines as belonging to the opponent of the hero. According to him this feeling of despondency is that of the hero himself. Referring to the grammatical construction of this part of the poem, one finds that all the lines there form but complements to 'Araicu' in line 79. This 'Araicu' is interpreted to mean the opponent

by both the commentators. Therefore, the interpretation of Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ is a little forced inasmuch as his construction goes against the natural flow of the lines. From lines 67 to 76 the despondent mood is described. If the defeated king is despondent, as interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar, no question arises.

But why is the hero despondent as explained away by the new commentator? This question is not answered according to Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ. The hero makes his victorious charge and wins the next day. This part, however, of the poem, which according to this commentator dilates, so much to his distaste, upon the graphic details of the camp and upon the king's despondency, makes no specific reference to the battle on the next day or his heroic charge. The conception of victory has to be forced on our mind by the suggestive power of the lines 77 and 78. "With the fingers holding the weapons aimed at enemies he sets aright his Victorious laurel." In the previous lines, which describe so realistically the scene, the king or the hero is found resting on his cot and the lines referred to above about the setting aright the laurel, follow without suggesting any change of scene from the bed chamber to the battle-field. Why is there no such suggestion? Is the poet averse to any description of war? In any case this summary reference to a victorious battle in the cryptic phrase, if at all it is such a reference, is out of tune with what this commentator feels as a dilatory elaboration in this part of the poem. Even if this interpretation were correct, this confusion of concentration is very misleading and robs the verse of its poetic worth. The new commentator may be disposed to agree with his condemnation; for he has as much contempt for Na-p-pūtanār as the old commentator has reverence for this author.

IV

Both the commentators proceed on the assumption that Mullai is staying at home by the heroine as directed by the hero, without making much of his separation. Even if this were so, should the heroine be unperturbed when the hero did not return at the appointed time? In so far as the heroine had patiently borne the separation without a murmur during all the period fixed by the hero the conception of Mullai and chastity must be taken to have been fulfilled and vindi-

cated. Therefore, in the absence of any specific injunction from the hero, overpowered by her anxiety for him, her nature and duty must work themselves out in despair and tears. Is it chastity to feel no anxiety under these trying conditions? Naccinārkkiniyar himself contemplates (see his commentary on Sūtram 14—Poruḷ Atikāram) such a case. He quotes from Kuṟun tokai (22) where the heroine cries in despair: "He has not come; but the rainy season (he had mentioned) is blooming everywhere with flowers" and asserts that this is Mullai, since the heroine by this very cry of despair shows that she has been bearing up with the separation, cheerfully without a murmur all along. "Paruvam kaṇṭu āṟṟāmai," (பருவம் கண்டு ஆற்றாமை). "The unbearable distress at the advent of the season" a well known Tamil term which Naccinārkkiniyar himself uses in this connection is a popular aspect of Mullai. To this extent distress of separation does enter into Mullai as well—the mixture of Mullai and Pālai referred to in the beginning itself. Perhaps the propriety of it all depends on the final feeling left in the reader's mind. If there is implicit or explicit suggestion or expectation of union, it is Mullai; if there is no such necessary suggestion, the feeling of separation will supervene and become the main sentiment when the poem will be Pālai.

Naccinārkkiniyar does take into consideration such cases of intervention of the feeling of separation in Mullai (see his commentaries on Sūtrams 9 Poruḷ Atikāram 431). Though the interpretation of that particular Sūtram itself, as referring to these instances, is another case of his strained construction, his theory may be justified by Sūtram 45 (Tolkāppiyam Poruḷ) and by the verses 431 to 440 and 451 to 461 on Akanāṉūṟu which introduce Pālai into Mullai. If, inspite of the intervention of the Pālai or feeling of separation, these verses can be Mullai according to Naccinārkkiniyar, why should he object to this coming in of Pālai in Mullai-p-pāṭṭu alone? Surely what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose. His rejoinder may be that in such a case, the poem will not be Mullai par excellence as it claims to be.

V

This commentator's objection implies more than this, probably based on the reference to the term or period of the

poem. The reference to 'Piṭavam' usually blooming in the rainy season and to the forest stream in these lines describing the pitching of the tents suggests to him the idea that these preparations are effected in the rainy season itself. From this, one has to conclude that the hero for proceeding against his enemies wrests himself away from his lady love at the beginning of the rainy season itself. This is, therefore, in terms of Tolkāppiyam a case of winter camp.

According to Tolkāppiyam there is an internal and external aspect for every human behaviour coming as a poetical theme; and Mullai or the chaste woman's behaviour is that internal aspect of human behaviour of which the external aspect is Vañci or invasion, offensive or defensive. What are these—this interiority and exteriority? Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar and before him Iḷampūraṇar, have pointed out that for the dramatic representation of both these Mullai and Vañci the background of space and time is the same viz., the rainy season—the evening time and the jungle or pastoral tract, as though the intrinsic relationship depends upon the outward phenomena alone without reference to the inward view of the deep lying unity of these two aspects of life. It is according to these commentators in the rainy season and at dusk that the loving couple usually at home feel the unusual absence of one another; it is again the rainy season that will provide ample water and rich grass for the warring men and animals. In support of their contention they quote from this Mullai-p-pāṭṭu itself the very lines referred to.

If this much is granted, the king starting in the rainy season cannot fix that very season as the appointed time for his return. Therefore, the distress and desolation of the heroine on a rainy evening as described in this poem cannot be taken to have grown out of his failure to return at the appointed time. This must be what is working in the mind of Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar.

It may be suggested that even this position of Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar is untenable. As this commentator himself points out (Sūtram 76 of Poruḷ Atikāram) the camps though they may last for full one year (Sūtram 1134 Tolkāppiyam) they will be classified, either as the camp of the cold months or as the camp of the hot months, according as the camp begins in summer (Vēn̲il) or in winter (Kūtir). It is seen

that Tolkāppiyar does not for obvious reasons contemplate the military action starting in the heavy rainy season. But once the campaign starts, it may continue through the rainy season as well. During the rainy season, people are forced to remain at home, and when this is not possible because of the war being continued, beyond the appointed time, the patience of the heroine and the valour of the hero are put to acid test. If they stand this test and come out victorious, all the more their glory. It is this way that Vañci and Mullai become one. On our concluding on this evidence that military action cannot begin in the rainy season, the hero cannot have taken leave of the heroine in the rainy season. There is no difficulty, therefore, in his fixing as usual the rainy season as the appointed time for his return. Why should not the heroine feel desparate at the advent of the appointed season of this rain? This, however, does not prevent the camp extending into the rainy season forcing the hero and heroine to undergo a spiritual test. In the light of these explanations, the camp described here is a summer camp.

As for the reference to the forest stream, it is nowhere stated to be in floods so as to compel us to conclude that the season of the camp is the rainy season. The reference to the fragrant 'piṭavu' usually blooming in the rainy season must be taken to suggest the unusual blooming of the 'piṭavu' in summer, a little before its time, perhaps, because of the fertility of the forest so very near the stream. Or, what is more probable, it may be that what is referred to, is not the actual fragrance of its flowers then blooming, but the natural characteristic of 'piṭavu' becoming fragrant in its blooming season. The heroine thinks of the cutting down of the 'piṭavu' and she is reminded of its sweet smell. Thus, it is not necessary to assume that this camp is a camp of the rainy season, as these details can very well go with a description of the summer camp.

CHAPTER V

MULLAI IN CAṄKAM

I

To act as one is told, which is the conception of chastity or Mullai, as put forth by the commentators, does not seem to be a great virtue, except it be on the battle-field. It may be, that domestic life may solve many of its difficulties, on the surface, by accepting this dictatorship of the "patria potestas" of the father or the husband, as the head of the family. But, as Tiruvaḷḷuvar emphasises, this kind of rule by force and fear—for, after all, in all these cases of obedience, the rod, though not coming before our eyes, is implied in the form of ostracism and negation of decent livelihood for her—is the practice of the mean: "Accamē Kiḻakaḷatu Ācāram". In such a case, the so-called idealised love of the Caṅkam poetry cannot be contemplating this implicit military obedience as its highest crown and glory of chastity. At the least, chastity ought to be an intrinsic positive outlook rather than this negation and an outward conformity. The heroine in Caṅkam literature of idealised love, meets the hero on equal terms; (Tolkāppiyam: 1038) and the idea of equality is emphasised and explained under various heads (Tol. 1218). Situations are contemplated in Tolkāppiyam where the hero has to go on bended knees to win and deserve the heroine's pardon (Tol. 1105). May not, therefore, one conclude that the commentators' conception of Mullai or chastity is a wrong and a blurred vision due to the refraction of the later day degradation? This wrong conception vitiates the commentaries, for it is really the will-o'-the wisp misleading them all and landing them into all the threatening difficulties of their interpretations.

The idealised gem of love has five facets: (1) 'Puṇarcci' or coming together of lovers; (2) 'Pālai' or their separation; (3) 'Marutam' or bouderie or their sulkings; (4) 'Neytal' or distress and despair and (5) 'Mullai' or sitting or being at home (Tol. 959).

'Puṇarcci' bespeaks not the feeling of union and identity. Identity may be there; but the overwhelming feeling, at the

first flush is the feeling of the wonderful bliss of perfect identity of embrace, though it be for a moment. Tolkāppiyar makes this clear by making 'Puṇarcci' the mother of 'Uvakai' or happiness (Tol. 1204).

The feeling of separation and pain is uppermost in 'Pālai'. Separation is not merely physical. It is a threat of dissolution, of cutting in twain their identity by an act of God or by war or exigencies of state or necessities of life. Even in the presence of the Lord, this feeling of separation may supervene, for instance in elopement. There, though the heroine has become identified mentally with her hero, she has not as yet, for all outward purposes, become identified with him, as a wedded wife would be. The physical presence is not enough; the spiritual identity expressing itself in all walks of life is, therefore, felt as a necessity. Hence arises the feeling of separation even in his presence, when there is not a feeling of joint sharing of the situations of life. The sense of separation from her parents, her companions, her favourite pets and play-things continues for a time, owing to the force of habit, thus showing a progressive development of identity.

'Neytal' is the feeling of despair. This usually develops when the beloved is not seen for a long time, during the period of stolen love or rather clandestine love. The nucleus is the unconscious fear that this absence may be desertion. The despair and desolation may very well be imagined; for, that will be her spiritual and moral death, not to speak of the social ostracism and family dishonour. But in idealised love, it is not so gross and calculating. In view of the identity of the two souls, they become one with their lives; the physical separation is, therefore, a spiritual separation as well, more poignant than the separation of the body from the soul—one actually feels as it were, the gasp of death.

'Marutam' though exploding as anger is really a shrinking within; a feeling of inferiority complex; a sense of wounded honour, not a mere feeling of personal slight but a feeling for his personal dishonour (see 31 Marutam in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu) which is once again a revelation of the identity of souls.

Love is thus conceived as the bud of the individual ego or lesser self, blossoming into a higher and more universal identity and consciousness, shedding its isolation, selfishness

and narrow outlook, for a freer and happier air of expansion, self-sacrifice and universal vision—in short, the starting point of the cosmic conscience of the freed souls.

II

In all these, the identity of the souls emerging is implicit but not explicit. Its glow of joy, its wounded and angry feeling of the inferiority complex, the pang of physical separation, and the despair of isolation, have thus been set forth, but not the feeling of identity in itself. This feeling of identity is the consummation of true love, not only its bedrock, but also its copula. It blossoms in the main current of domestic life embodied in wedlock. This is 'Mullai', the other name for chastity. The tender jasmine of pure white and sweet fragrance is the emblem of this pure life of deep love. It is something more than a mere physical union and joint domestic life. Therefore, even when the lord is not there, she feels one with him, sharing his burden and responsibility. So does he. This is 'Iruttal' or being at home. "Eṉṉaiyum iruppatākkiṉaṉ:" 'Even me, he made feel at home (i.e., no more to fret and fume, no more to hanker after anything, no more to suffer in this life of love and service, becoming one with Him in service)'—So sings Māṇikkavācakar to his Lord. It is some such spirit of the mystic life that is found in 'Mullai'. This feeling of equilibrium, this experience of sharing, and this consciousness of the joint discharge of the duties of married life, come uppermost in 'Mullai'. It may not be always a sense of joy. Even as in poetry all the varied emotions come into play only to produce the contentment, the peace, the satisfaction and happiness at the end; so in 'Mullai', the whole gamut of emotions may be brought into full play but always there is the basic note of contentment of satisfaction and happiness of shared experience, whatever be its colour.

This sense of communion or the commingling of souls, this sense of ultimate identity, is often mistaken for forbearance, patience and disciplined obedience. It is really the merging of the individual in the more inclusive and higher unity—a loving and free submission to the guiding ideal of their joint loving service. The lady realises the duties of the world—her duties at home and his duties elsewhere. It

is a happy duty-sharing, with the realisation that they are physically, mentally, and spiritually complementary to each other, in the discharge of their duties in their varied fields. Sometimes, this realisation goes deeper, as to become a revelation; and there the woman's identity with her lord is so very fundamental, that she has an inner intuitive understanding of his duties and the way he would discharge them. This poem under discussion will be seen to support this view. It is because of this, the wife is praised as the minister.

Nakkīrar, the poet and philosopher of Love, in his commentary on Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ explains (அன்பு) 'Aṉpu' as this inexplicable feeling of identity, which can therefore be recognised only by its true symptoms of the lovers, undergoing the same experience, suffering the same pains and dying in the self same way. The lovers, thus, as Kapilar hints at, form a unity, like the fabulous bird of two heads but with one body and soul. It is not mere sympathy but a spiritual communion, each thinking, feeling and acting as the other does, representing an advaitic relation. 'Avaḷē tāṉē' of the second Cūttiram of Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ reminds us of the 'Avaṉē tāṉē' of Sivagñāna Bhōdam. In common folklore, the old, humorously remark "She is down with headache and, lo! he becomes sick with the self-same headache". The hero and the heroine are so tuned to the same frequency, that, when the harp of life of the one vibrates, the other also resonates in unison. This is the highest pinnacle of Mullai. If a poem reveals this feeling of identity, it is Mullai, whether there is joy or despondency, all these coming there only to heighten this mystic feeling and experience, especially when the other emotions can never develop into jarring notes throwing the poem out of tune with itself.

III

The Caṅkam literature vindicates this conception of 'Mullai'. Out of the 2381 verses of this literature now available 220 or roughly 10% are labelled Mullai. Of these 100 come from Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, 40 from Akam, 41 from Kuṟuntokai, 22 from Naṟṟiṇai and 17 from Kalittokai.

On account of its higher elevation of thought, as explained, its rarer occurrence may be expected. Probably it is because of this, Tolkāppiyar has given the pre-eminent first

position to this 'Mullai' in his enumeration of the five aspects of love. Like the state of health, this suffused feeling of identity colouring the successful domestic life does not ordinarily attract our attention. It is like the perfect equanimity of the Saint. Is there not a theory of poetry that 'Vakrōkti' or crooked expression or stating the thing in an out-of-the-way fashion, is the life of poetry? Domestic life seems to many, a humdrum affair not easily amenable to any such 'Vakrōkti'. This is also responsible for the rare occurrence of this theme. It is no wonder therefore, that a poet who has successfully raised this theme to poetic perfection and appreciation should be called the great—'Pūtaṉār, the Great'.

Caṅkam literature handles this theme of Mullai, in a few well established patterns. First and foremost is the picture of the happy domestic life marking the perfect contentment and emphasising the supreme value of the family consisting of the husband, the wife and the children, all feeling at home round the family hearth. The very first ten verses of the Mullai centum in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, known as the 'Cevili-p-pattu' (செவிலிப் பத்து) "The ten of the Foster Mother" convey to the mother of the heroine the happy sight of this loving family, which the foster mother or the nurse of the heroine was blessed with, on her visit to the heroine's residence. The famous and oft-quoted verse in the Kuṟuntokai describing the rich heroine of the slender form, preparing a simple meal and beaming with joy when he partakes of it with relish, deals with this very theme (247). So does another verse in the same collection (167). Instead of the 'Cevili', the hero himself may be giving expression to this satisfaction to the heroine (270). This pattern of 'Mullai' may be looked upon as showing its latent heat or glow. Aiṅkuṟunūṟu is specialising in this particular brand of 'Mullai'.

The other pattern which may be looked upon as showing its patent heat or glow becomes known to us because of its greater glow, when the hero who had gone away on an important errand, returns home to enjoy the rainy season with all the members of the family. Akam and to a lesser extent Naṟṟiṇai, seem to specialise in this vein. The hero may himself give expression to this sense of joy, by way of describing and praising the rainy season. கிழவன் பருவம் பாராட்டும் பத்து 'Kiḻavaṉ paruvam pārāṭṭum pattu': The

Ten of hero's praise of the season — in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu). The heroine's companions (Akam 104, 184, 304) or her other attendants (Akam 354) may express their joy of the reunion of the loving couple. (வரவுச்சிறப்புரைத்த பத்து 'Varavu-c-ciṟappuraitta pattu':—The ten of the glory of his return). See also 'Viravu-p-pattu': The miscellaneous Ten in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu.

This is the joy of an achievement but just before this actual return, occurs the joy of sweet expectations. This gives play to his imagination and is, therefore, sweeter and more exhilarating than the joy of actual reunion; for the actual never reaches the height of the imagined. There are, therefore, more verses in this strain. The hero orders for the chariot for his return journey. He requests the charioteer to go faster. He takes the latter into his confidence and expresses to him the joy of his return or her expectations. These various situations are imagined by the poets as worthy of poetic elaboration of 'Mullai'. (Akam 34, 44, 64, 94, 114, 124, 134, 144, 154, 224, 234, 244, 254, 264, 274, 284, 334, 344 and 373.—In this connection it may be pointed out that all the numbers ending in 4 denote 'Mullai' in 'Akam'. Kuṟuṅtokai 233 and 400; Naṟṟiṇai 42, 59, 81, 121, 142, 161, 194, 221, 242, 321 and 371.) The hero may be explaining his expectations and the heroine's conditions to the people on the way (Naṟ. 372). Or, he may be speaking to himself in soliloquy—the poetic representation of his thoughts (Kuṟ. 169). Or, he may be rhetorically giving a twist to this soliloquy as a loving address to the Mullai flower, the sign of the rainy season and the symbol of chastity (Kuṟ. 168). Others may be describing his joyous return (Akam. 324 and 384, Naṟṟiṇai 394). Pāṇaṉ, the bard, the common envoy of love, may herald his return (Akam. 14). The lady companion, on the advent of the season, may console the heroine by pointing out that the hero is on his way to return (Akam. 4, Kuṟ. 358 and 387, Naṟ. 66, 115, 181, 248 and 361). She may also be describing their feelings of past expectation to the hero on his return (Kuṟ. 99, 193, 210 and 323). Or, when the hero and the heroine are happily together the heroine may, by an unknown freak of her imagination, worked out by the unbelievable joy of the union, express an anxiety for the continuity of this happiness in the future. The hero will hasten

to reassure her that he will not leave her (Viravu-p-pattu: Aiṅkuṟunūṟu.).

All this may be taken to represent the suffused light of 'Mullai', its potential energy as it were. Its kinetic energy flares up with greater brilliance in the absence of each other, separated by a sense of duty, during the rainy season, when all are expected to be at home. The heroine may feel this sense of overwhelming duty. It is not the feeling of separation so much as this feeling of stupendous duty that is emphasised in 'Mullai.' The body may refuse to listen to the inner voice of duty. The heroine may speak out her mind either of her own accord as a release to her pent up feelings, or she may take counsel with her companion, or she may express herself in reply to the companion's shallow view of things (Akam. 74, 194, 264, 294 and 364; Naṟ. 69, 97, 99, 238, 289, 364 and 381; Kuṟ. 64, 65, 66, 98, 108, 110, 155, 180, 183, 191, 194, 221, 240, 279, 310, 344, 364, 387 and 391). Kuṟuntokai seems to make this its special version of 'Mullai'. The companion may object to the heroine's conclusion that the rainy season, the season of his return, has begun. All this is from the side of the heroine. At the other end, the hero compelled to stay on, on the battle-field, overpowered by his sense of duty, may think of his wife and her burdens at the promised approach of the season (pācaṟai-p-pattu—the ten of the military camp in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu; Akam. 24, 164, 174, 214 and 304). In passing it may be noted that whilst Kuṟuntokai elaborates the heroine's point of view, Akam elaborates the hero's point of view.

IV

'Mullai-k-kali' in Kali-t-tokai stands by itself as a separate island in the main-stream of 'Mullai.' It is more realistic, without, at the same time, forgetting the ideal. It is more in touch with the common folks and their lives, reminding us of the 'Paḷḷus' of the later days thus falsifying the theory that the Tamil poets move in a world of their own, far away from the world of the common mass of the people and their folk songs. This pastoral lyric of 'Kali', like all other Caṅkam poems is a bold experiment and a great success in poetry. The life of the ordinary shepherd lads and lasses, their love-making, and their bull fights, their play, their activity of grazing

their herds and the sale of milk products are described as a background for the spiritual drama of their souls of love.

These heroes of the sylvan tract, go to no war of 'vañci', but their heroism stands revealed on the field of the bull fight. The kings go to defend their kingdom and through that their happy life with the queen, on the battle-field. 'Vañci' is thus 'Mullai' in its exterior aspect. If one imagines the defeat and all its consequences to the domestic happiness of the king and the queen, one can easily visualise the inter-connection between 'Vañci' and 'Mullai'. But what moves them is not selfishness but the love of their ideal of self-sacrifice in the name of their family and in the name of their country. Defeat is not merely the loss of individual happiness but the fall of a state, the kingdom of God come on earth, as they have conceived. Because of this the heroine is forced to agree to the hero's departure to the battlefield (Naṟ. 266). Probably it is this that is implied in the interpretation Naccin̲ārkkin̲iyar gives for the word *(நல்ல)* 'Nalla' occurring in Mul̲lai-p-pāṭṭu *(அவர் அங்கனம் வினை முடித்து வருதல் நமக்கு இல்லறம் நிகழ்தற்குக் காரணம் ஆதலின் நல்ல காரியம்).* Avar aṅkan̲am vin̲ai muṭittu varutal namakku illaṟam nikal̲taṟku-k-kāraṇam ātalin̲ nalla kāriyam — "His returning victorious in this military action will promote the successful discharge of our domestic duties, therefore it is good".—So writes Naccin̲āṟkkin̲iyar.

The same spirit of safe-guarding the domestic happiness and through that the realisation, on this Earth, of their youthful joint dream of an Arcadia, drives the shepherds to the cruel bull fights and their love inspires them to great acts of valour and final victory. There is the magic of the personal magnetism of the bewitching eyes of their lasses. The heroine is not far away in her palace: here, she is on the visitors' gallery, so to say, round the field of bull fight, sharing the heroism, the anxiety and the joy of the victory of the shepherd lad, her face clearly expressing the varied and momentary kaleidoscopic changes of her heart, beating in unison with the heart of the shepherd lad fighting the bull. What the heroine, for instance, in 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu', can only imagine, the shepherd lass sees and experiences with her open eyes and thumping heart. Her duty sharing is more on the public view. It is not merely a commingling of two souls but a con-

template of universal happiness of Arcadia that guides the action of these pastoral people. Many of their songs in this 'Mullai-k-kali' wind up with a prayer for, or a blessing on, the commonweal, the kingdom of Pāṇḍya and its people.

We said the sharing of the feeling is more on the public view in 'Mullai-k-kali.' The courting is also much more open, there than elsewhere, the lads and lasses go about in the open and more often than is possible in other places. This free love, thanks to their innocence, is always pure and chaste, reminding us of Duṣyanta courting Sakuntala in a jungle tract like this. The pastoral poetry of this human group of Sylvan tract, a haven of idealised love, is, by contrast and implication, not a condemnation of this simple arcadia but an unmeant subtle satire on urban life and its pretensions. What of greater interest is that this is not the story of one couple, but the life adventure of numerous loving couples all sitting round the tournament of bull-fight. (See Mullai-k-kali 6). 'Mullai' is the lodestar of wedlock, but is found in courtship as well. In open courtship this is as it ought to be (Mullai-k-kali 1, 2, 5 especially lines 58 to 60). The feeling of identity breathes everywhere in the life of these simple people, inspite of their rusticity and open love making, their playful taunts and humorous outbursts. The lass, wantonly and unreasonably, teases the lad for not openly sharing the responsibilities of her life (211). That this feeling of joint wedlock and its responsibilities even in courtship is, therefore, justified in view of their kind of life. Tolkāppiyar hints at the golden age when there was no wedding ceremony, and there, free love must have started on its arduous path of dutiful domestic life, immediately after their first meeting and common consent, even as Sakuntala had started on hers (Tol. 1090). It is true that the pastoral people have their marriage ceremonies, as is made clear by these very poems, but all the same, the free love of the unsophisticated shepherds makes for the joint sharing of duties because of the longer period of open courtship recognised and permitted by their society.

V

Unless understood in this light, it will be very difficult to bring the 17 verses of 'Mullai-k-kali' under the head of 'Mullai', except it be that they are 'Mullai' because of their em-

phasis merely on the environment of the 'Mullai' country or Sylvan tract. But that will be taking a very superficial view of things. It is Uripporuḷ Mullai that is really important more than the 'Mutaṟporuḷ Mullai' (Tol. 949). 'Akam' 394 which gives the picture of the hoped-for domestic life as visualised even during courtship and similarly Naṟṟiṇai 26 and 376 can be understood as 'Mullai', only if this conception of 'Mullai', here developed, is thus understood.

Once this is realised, one can imagine cases where this spirit inspires even the life of the erstwhile harlot now becoming the chaste and pure beloved of the hero, an ideal, which must give the hope of social regeneration by social service. Is it not what has happened in the lives of Mātavi and Kōvalaṉ? This is not reading modern ideas into ancient poetry, for this creates no jarring note in that world of polygamy. The seeds of this very story of Mātavi, in a sense, may be found in Caṅkam verses like Kuṟuntokai 370. "For the outside world we are two, at home we are one like the fingers —the thumb and the other fingers, no more separated but becoming one in drawing the bow, i.e., in outward form we are two, but in action—in the discharge of the duties—we are one."—This is what the erstwhile harlot says. It is such a vivid picture of the commonwealth of domestic life that the poet has come to be known as 'Villaka Viraliṉār' after the phrase of the simile he had himself coined. These exceptional situations thus prove the uniform course of 'mullai' poetry. The under-current, like the gulf stream, is running hot, whatever the surface may be. The other conception of the heroine patiently waiting for the appointed time as told by the hero, which is but a mere negative attitude, cannot explain all these positive aspects of the various situations of 'Mullai' contemplated by the Caṅkam poets.

Where does this idea of patient waiting and implicit obedience spring from? When the hero goes to discharge his duties, the heroine knowingly submits to the force of an overpowering duty. It is not one sided; it is a joint resolution as is brought out by the phrase 'Vaṟpuṟutti Ēkal'—going after convincing her. This submission to the inevitable, characterises the hero as well. To call this active and conscious self-surrender in the cause of higher ideal, a negative patient waiting, is to abuse language. It is really the effacement of

the smaller self, in the cause of the higher consciousness of their joint ideal—a true spiritual self-surrender or 'Caraṇā-kati' or 'Ātma nivēdana.' They both bear the burden of this suffering without any grudging, without a thought on anything other than the duty coming before the mind's eye. The body and the unconscious mind may revolt, but not their conscious mind. Even this seeming revolt disappears when the sublimation is complete and successful in uniting the unconscious with the conscious.

In Kuṟuntokai (21 and 94) the heroine solemnly declares she can bear it all. Even when the season of union supervenes, the heroine is more certain about the hero than the hero himself, so sure indeed, that she asserts, he will not fail to come, now that the season has started (Naṟ. 289). There may be an expression of suffering but it is not her personal selfish grievance. All through the 'Puṟavu-p-pattu' (Aiṅkuṟunūṟu)—the Ten of the sylvan tract—it is implied that the heroine feels for the hero going through the scorching desert; and it is because of this that the companion, after the inquiries, hastens to point out that the way he is taking is full of shade and water. In another poem, this feeling for him, because of her complete identity with him, is very well brought out (Kuṟ. 289): "We are suffering like the crushed up sprout by this feeling of anxiety. Whilst we continue toiling hard without our lord nearby to share the burden—therefore feeling the weight all the more—the rain comes on the top of it all. We feel for him: (A hint for sharing his duties). The city feels for us more—condemning him for leaving us alone. It is this that makes me sad," says the heroine. This clearly proves, it is the concern for the hero, his duties and reputation that comes uppermost in their mind.

CHAPTER VI

THE LIGHT OF ASŌKA

I

It will be seen that in this Mullai-p-pāṭṭu, the poet is combining all these situations of Mullai, the overwhelming duty of the war, the companion's counsel, the onset of season, the concern for the hero, the return of the hero, the joy of the attendants, over and above all the identity of the hero and the heroine, their sharing of the duties, and the spiritual evolution of their joint personality through all this experience thus holding up before our mind's eye the glorious Caṅkam vision of Mullai. With this in view one may study this poem in detail.

II

This poem from the grammatical point of view is one long sentence ending with the predicate 'Āliṉa' *(ஆலின)*. (The horse neighed joyfully, so as to resound all through the ears of the heroine). What is found within brackets is the complement to the predicate. This idea of the heroine is however expressed in three subordinate sentences ending respectively in 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)* (22), Kāṇāḷ *(காணாள்)* (80), Kitantōḷ *(கிடந்தோள்)* (88). "She sees not"; "She sees not"; "She lies down." According to Tamil idiom, the first two become conjunctive participles "not seeing" *(காணாளாய்)*, so as to become the complement of the third *(கிடந்தாள்)*. This third predicate becomes deverbalised and nominalised so as to move with the force of a genitive governing the word "ear". The horses neigh with joy so as to resound in the ears of her who is lying down, not seeing (this) and not seeing (this). That is the grammatical construction of the sentence of this poem.

The first subordinate sentence is 'Kāṭṭavum Kāṭṭavum Kāṇāḷ' *(காட்டவும் காட்டவும் காணாள்)*. "The companions show her and show her: she sees not." It is clear from the context that "seeing" is not physical but mental. The second subordinate sentence is 'In tuyil vatiyunaṉ Kāṇāḷ' *(இன் துயில் வதியுநன் காணாள்)*. "She sees not him residing in sleep." This is the skeleton of the two major subordinate sentences coming one after the other in

this poem. The rest of the poem preceding the second predicate is only its complement. Failing to analyse the sentence of a poem, people have been misled by the second 'Kāṇāḷ' (காணாள்) which they have tried to understand in the literal sense instead of in the same figurative sense in which they have understood the first 'Kāṇāḷ' (காணாள்).

III

Naccinārkkiṉiyar has taken it to mean that the heroine sees that her husband lying by her side is not sleeping. Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ has interpreted this to mean that whilst the hero in the camp is sleeping in the sweet and happy expectation of meeting the heroine the very next day, the heroine at home does not see him lying by her side on the cot. Nacciṉarrkiniyar's heroine is alarmed at the thought that she might be deprived of his embrace if he were to start, as of old, on his military adventure. Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ's heroine pines for the hero's physical embrace on the deserted cot. This is the very last idea that can actuate the feelings of the chaste wife in that moment of anxiety for him. Though there is nothing diabolical about this idea of physical union which may after all lead to spiritual elevation, it is not befitting the situation of anxiety.

'In tuyil vatiyunaṉ' (இன்துயில்வதியுநன்) is the phrase describing the hero. The form of the word ('Vatiyunaṉ' (வதியுநன்) requires some attention. The finite verb, for example Vantāṉ வந்தான் in Tamil is sometimes formed from the conjunctive particle 'Vantu' வந்து by the addition of the suffix Aṉ அன் (a shortened form of a third person masculine singular noun Avaṉ அவன்). On rare occasions for example in 'Vantavaṉ,' (வந்தவன்), the finite form seems to be formed from the relative participle 'Vanta' (வந்த) by the addition of this suffix. This form 'Vantavaṉ' (வந்தவன்) is a nominalised form and is used as such. There is the relative participle of the form 'ceyyum' (செய்யும்) and in the Caṅkam age there are a number of nominalised forms, formed from this like 'puraiyunar' (புரையுநர்), 'ceṟunar' (செறுநர்), 'varunar' (வருநர்), 'cellunar' (செல்லுநர்), 'kūppeyarkkuntu' (கூப்பெயர்க்குந்து). 'Vatiyunaṉ' (வதியுநன்) is one such word. 'Ceyyum' formula, though connoting the future (Tol. 711) usually denotes all the three tenses (Tol. 724), that is, it expresses the real characteristic feature of a

thing. Taken in the sense 'Vatiyunaṉ' *(வதியுநன்)* from the root 'vati' *(வதி)* along with the 'Iṉtuyil'*(இன்துயில்)*, forming a compound of the fom 'vaḻippōkkaṉ' *(வழிப்போக்கன்)* is more cohesive than the 'vēṟṟumaittokai' *(வேற்றுமைத் தொகை)* the declensional compound, almost appearing like a word, as though the root was the compound base 'Iṉtuyil vati' *(இன்துயில் வதி)*. This compound should mean 'one who is accustomed to reside in sleep'—a denizen of the world of sleep—a masculine sleeping beauty so to say—in short one wont to sleep well.

Kāṇāḷ *(காணாள்)* then must mean "she does not see him sleeping as of old comfortably, without any care, enjoying fully the sleep. This shows his past moral and physical contentment. (The verb is in the past tense but we are using the historical present). At the present moment, the duties are so pressing, or conflicting, that he finds no time to sleep, much less to enjoy sleep. He is in the camp and she is at home. The seeing referred to cannot, therefore, be in the literal sense, a physical sight—but can only be in a figurative sense, a mental vision. If the first Kāṇāḷ *(காணாள்)* is not used in the literal sense, as admitted by the commentators, this second 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)* of the very next sentence, an elaboration of the first 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)* cannot be taken to have been used literally.

IV

'Kāṭṭavum Kāṭṭavum Kāṇāḷ' *(காட்டவும் காட்டவும் காணாள்)* "The companions explain the omen. She does not appear to be listening to them"—To console her somehow perhaps they describe and explain; in short, paint a picture of his march, his camp, his battle of blood-curdling valour, his victory and of his comfortable sleep after the victory in the sweet expectation of returning to her. They thus give her various pen pictures from the various points of view, which they feel, according to their mental attainment, will appeal to the heroine. But she sees not. She does not see eye to eye with them. She is not, therefore, consoled. In the next sentence we are told again she sees not. Here we are fortunately told what she does not see. She does not see him sleeping comfortably on the cot—not on her cot. The emphasis is on the fact that he is not enjoying sleep as of old. This

itself makes clear, what the companions must have been describing. They have been assuring her, of his setting up a fortified and comfortable camp, where everything luxurious is found to such a great extent that even the beasts suffer from surfeit; they give in detail the arrangement there, which is artistic and which permits personal secrecy and retirement; they describe his attendants serving him, at every step, truthfully and watchfully, valiantly and hopefully. They speak of his spears and the hewing down of elephants, of his arrows piercing through the horses, of his personal prowess and valour, killing heroes of many battles. They assert his victory and paint in glorious colours his comfortable sleep after this in the hope of coming back to her the very next day.—All this is attempted by them to convince her, that she need not, because of the advent of the season, have any anxiety about him or any doubt about his certain victorious return. She does not see this picture especially the picture of the peaceful and comfortable sleep of the hero. Taken thus in the first two connected sentences "seeing" cannot but be the mental vision. The use of the same word—its repetition, as the predicate in both the sentences, brings out their interconnection and puts the reader on his guard, against taking the second 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)* (80) literally.

The very next line (81) makes this idea clear: 'Neñcāṟṟuppaṭutta niṟai tapu pulampoṭu' *(நெஞ்சாற்றுப்படுத்த நிறைதபு புலம்பொடு)* "with the feeling of desolation killing her mental equanimity because of her having guided her own mind to go on its way to the hero." This is the very heart of the poetic art, in our view, the magic key to unlock the poetic mansion wherein rises the great poetic vision of the heroine. It is the quintessence of the poetic explanation of this very poem. It is a pity that this poem has not been named after this beautiful phrase as 'Neñcāṟṟuppaṭai' *(நெஞ் சாற்றுப்படை)* even as 'Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai' had been named after its own poetic phrase 'Murukāṟṟuppaṭutta' and even as 'Kūttarāṟṟuppaṭai' *(கூத்தராற்றுப்படை)* had been christened Malai paṭu kaṭām , *(மலைபடுகடாம்)* because of that beautiful phrase occurring in that poem. The camp described here is her mental vision.

As the attendants describe the camp and the war, her mind goes to him. This is the 'Neñcāṟṟuppaṭai' *(நெஞ்சாற்*

றுப்படை) her guiding the mind to the hero. It is this way the battle-field and the camp of war are brought before her mental eye. Her whole life, her joint life with the hero, their joint ideals—all these are aglow with life, in her intuition. The result is the vision. How can she describe the battle-field? An objection may be raised on the basis of 'Sūtrams' 1246 and 1247 of Tolkāppiyam that the heroine who keeps herself within the four walls of her palace or the city, cannot describe the battle-field which she could never have seen. As the very 'Sūtrams' make it clear, her attendants by actual experience and by hearsay have a wider knowledge of the world and they it is that first paint the scenes of war. It is their version that sets the heroine a-thinking and her intuition and her identity with the hero, make the necessary changes therein and present the true vision. The objection, therefore, does not hold good.

V

This 'Neñcāṟṟuppaṭai' (நெஞ்சாற்றுப்படை), referring back to the battle-field, brings the full significance of the mental union of the hero and the heroine. This also reveals the underlying unity of noumenon and phenomenon, 'Aka mullai' and 'Pūṟa Vañci.' According to Tolkāppiyam and it must be according to the Caṅkam literature as well, the external nature and the internal spirit, form a complete whole, acting in unison. 'Mullai' or the internal spiritual life and the 'Vañci' or the struggle of the external world are complementary to each other, they are like the two sides of a coin; the internal and external aspects of one and the same life. There is the invasion and the struggle outside and our duty inspires us to fight the evil forces. The duty is part of our inner spirit; self sacrifice and self surrender guide our action from within; it is born of that intense domestic love where the little self had already become merged and extinguished itself in a higher ideal of life and love. Thus the inner force comes to win the outer force and in its turn the inner force will enjoy with its beloved and the world at large the happiness of peace. Here is not only the external struggle but also the internal struggle. 'Mullai' is not only the identity of two lovers but also the natural victory of a personality in performing aright one's allotted duties in this world, as opposed

to 'Vākai', the external victory. When this victoriously integrated personality, wins also the external victory, it is brought under the head 'Vākai', but even there, it is referred to as 'Mullai', because the victory is not the victory of the sword and the muscle, but the victory of the well integrated successful personality natural to that individual who is the conqueror.

All this is not to be looked upon from the individual point of view. The victory, anywhere, is the victory of the society. In explaining 'Mullaikkali', this loving concern for the commonweal has been pointed out as a great active force in 'Mullai'. It is only when one leaves the individual centre that the artificial division into the exterior and the interior disappears. The force of the environment can never be minimised, the intrinsic merit can also be never forgotten as the soul of this very universe. The union of the exterior and the interior is thus very well brought out all through this poem beginning with the rain, running through the heart of the poem where come in, the jungle and the mid-night, and closing with the description of the forest through which the hero returns.

VI

This description of the battle-field, where 'Vañci' and 'Mullai' meet, is looked upon by Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ as something external to the progress of the poem, coming there only to keep us in suspense—not an ennobling idea of literature; for, suspension is the vulgar and melodramatic artifice of the Hollywood. This description—the 'neñcāṟṟuppaṭai' is something deeper and more intrinsic to the poem.

This picture of the battle-field portrays the hero in a mood of despondency. Why is he despondent? This is the question which rises uppermost in the reader's mind. Naccinārkkiṉiyar makes this the despondency of the defeated kings. All this description appears to be the complement of the noun phrase "shuddering king" in the phrase 'Aracu iruntu paṉikkum Pācaṟai' (79)—"the camp where the sovereignty sits and shudders." Because of this allusion to shuddering, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar interprets it as referring to the defeated king. But, the words as they run refer only to the victorious hero; and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar has to wrest away the

two lines about the laurel of victory from their place to be linked on with lines 89 etc. If we do not agree with him, there is the problem of the shuddering of the victorious king to be explained. Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ describes the despondency of our hero and explains away the shuddering 'aracu' as referring to the enemy king, under captivity in the camp of the hero. The description of the camp from lines 24 to 79 must according to him be the complement of the word 'vatiyunaṉ' (வதியுநன்) and not of the word 'aracu' in line 79, the sense leaping as it were like a frog leaping onto the 80th line which comes like a parenthesis though it is another complement to 'vatiyunaṉ' (வதியுநன்). Therefore, he has no problem of the victorious king shuddering in the victorious camp, but in any case any interpretation which will avoid this frog's leap must necessarily carry greater weight, if the hurdle of the shuddering problem is safely crossed.

VII

Coming to the cause of the despondency, Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ explains that the hero is despondent, because till then he has not been successful and that, therefore, after pondering over the loss and disablement of his army, he rushes next day into war and by personal prowess and courage, wins the laurel of victory. In this interpretation, the real difficulty, as already hinted, is that his personal battle is not clearly referred to beyond any doubt. That the hero is victorious there can be no doubt; the explicit word 'veṉṟu' (victorious) in line 89 declares that, in no uncertain terms. What is denied here by us is that the king is despondent because he has not succeeded. In the enumeration of the objects of his cogitation, there come in the very heart of these thoughts, the warriors of victorious laurels who have breathed their last in their very act of victory. The reference to the victory of the soldiers, tantamounts to a reference to the victory of their king. There is no more need to leap into the thick of the battle as far as that war is concerned. There is of course his burning desire for a war to conquer the whole world, (மண்டமர் நசை Maṇṭamar Nacai 67) and the man of the water-clock hails him as one going about on this campaign of world war. But these are inspired by the success he has achieved and not by a defeat. The scene is laid in that midnight, inside

his apartment in its isolation; he is as it were inside his very heart. This scene ostensibly does not change to the scene of the next morning or of the battle-field. Except setting aright the laurel with his fingers no other action is even hinted at. Even as the phrase 'Nalvalan tirutti' (நல்வலந் திருத்தி) referring to the victorious warriors, contemplates no other action on their part to set aright their laurels except what they have already done, namely, the hewing down of the elephants and thereby dying in that very moment of victory, so the same phrase applied to the hero implies no further act on his part other than the smoothening of the laurel, which implies a smoothening of his agitated mind; this ought to be the end of that scene of despondency. The victory effected without any outward act can only be mental. This implies no further active warfare but a change in the spiritual outlook bringing righteous victory by that very change of heart.

How is this possible? A closer scrutiny of these lines may throw their own light on this problem. As already admitted, the heroine does not doubt the valour of the hero or his ultimate victory. A queen of the warrior clan knows what war is. She will never welcome a defeated king running away from the war—at least Caṅkam age would not tolerate such a conception. She is as certain as others that he will be successful and that he must have won the war by this time—alas at what cost of precious lives! Her sorrow can therefore be only a sorrow of victory. That is where she does not see eye to eye with her attendants who cannot be expected to reach her level of spiritual perfection.

VIII

On the surface of it, this "Sorrow of Success" or the tragedy of a victory sounds like a contradiction in terms. This is not merely a poetic oxymoron but a historical fact. Asōka after his Kaliṅga war is not enamoured of his victory. He is not happy over his success. The empty glory of a global sovereignty no more haunts him. There arises a great revulsion of feeling against war and he undergoes a great conversion. He becomes the Messiah of Peace and Virtue. As according to Tolkāppiyam the ideal poetry of 'Akam' should not be the poetry of the accident of a personality but the poetry of the universal truth, no name of the hero is given

in this poem. The name of Asōka can, therefore, be never mentioned in this poem. The ideal is greater than the particular. Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ suggests that the king is probably the Pāṇḍyan Neṭuñceḻiyan̲ who is the hero of the subsequent two idylls in Pattuppāṭṭu. In view of the injunction of Tolkāppiyam, this need be neither denied nor accepted. Even the ideal of a Netuñceḻiyan̲ in the mind of the poet may still further be idealised by clothing his personality with that of an Asōkan Spirit.

The insuperable difficulty in accepting this interpretation, here offered, lies in the unique mind of Asōka, something unknown to exist elsewhere. This difficulty may be easily cleared away if it can be shown that the ideal of Asōka was in the minds of the Caṅkam poets. That Asōka had within his empire all the states of India up to the northern boundary of Tamiḻakam is common knowledge. His pillars engraved with his message of Peace and Dharma are found all over India and one was also at Kāñcīpuram, if we were to believe Hiuen Tsang. The Tamil country, reading these edicts, cannot have been oblivious of his conversion after the war, as he has himself sent his ambassadors of peace to the kingdoms of the Tamil land. There are evidences to show that his son Mahēndra on his way to Ceylon passed through the Tamil country. Instead of relying upon this inference, one can base one's conclusion on the positive evidence of actual knowledge disclosed by 'Kaḷḷil Āttiraiyan̲ār'. This poet is praising a patron 'Ātan̲ Uṅkan̲' and describes him as the Ford of Charity or Dharma *(அறத்துறை)* undertaking to protect many a people every day. This poet compared this Ford of Dharma to the extensive sphere of charity of the 'Moriyas,' where on the rocks of the borderline mountains the chariots roll and where flocks the whole world as though it were a universal corridor. The combination of these suggestive ideas—Moriyas, the corridor of the world, the Ford of Dharma—cannot but refer to the Great Emperor Asōka of History (Puṟam. 175). This is not the solitary instance of the Tamilians' knowledge of the Moriyas; the other references have been already given in discussing the age of the Caṅkam poetry. In view of this popularity of Asōka in the Tamil country, the interpretation given here may not appear to be a forced one: In addition to this, there is the conception of Jina as applied to the moral

victory of Buddha and Mahāvīra. Is not Maturai-k-kāñci holding forth that great ideal? Therefore even if one does not see any reference to Asōka or his ideals in this poem, our interpretation may stand as expressing the ideal of the Tamil land.

IX

The heroine sees her hero in the self same despondency in which Asōka was. Having known his loving heart and ideals she pictures forth truly his mental condition. It is here the conception of the commonweal comes in, in this poem. Is it her own feeling and imagination or the feeling of the hero correctly guaged by the heroine? It is suggested it is the latter. In this lies the greatness of Mullai the perfect identity of the souls as well as the natural victory of an integrated personality. The union of the souls in love is so real that the lady love has the same thoughts as the hero. She shares his burden. She may not carry the arrow and the bow as the hero does. This may be denied to women but not the joint pilgrimage to the highest flights of thought and feeling. She may not carry arms, but nothing prevents her heart at home vibrating in unison with the harp of the hero's heart on the battle-field. The heroine is too tender and inexperienced to bear the burden of arm, yet she grows stronger in life by this very dutiful experience to bear a greater burden. Those who deny this to women, know not the heights to which they can rise.

The vision is her own. The description of the camp is the description of the vision she sees. We must scrutinise carefully what are the points in the vision of the attendants that have appealed to her so as to find a place herein. It is these thoughts that culminate in the despondency at the end. Every phrase and every adjective are important, for they have become impressed on her mind. The implications must be grasped aright, as leading on to the overwhelming feeling of the misery of victory, slowly, in every phrase, rolling like snow balls, and gaining strength in the end as an avalanche. The description has been already given in the opening paraphrase. In what follows the suggestive force of all the words is being brought out as a continuous flow of her feeling and thought.

CHAPTER VII

NENCAṞṞUPPAṬAI OR THE VISION

I

The 'piṭavu' whose flowers and fragrance she was wont to enjoy and relish from a great distance and the green bushes pacifying by their very cooling colour, all her mental turmoils—all these on a land so fertile by the side of the encircling forest stream, which, like an endearing mother embracing her child, fertilises the rich forest within its hold by its milk of water are all mercilessly cut down and destroyed—an act of pure vandalism—in short a rape on nature. The primitive inhabitants of this primeaval forest with their cave like fortresses of ancient times, fare no better. It is this destruction that is often glorified as the supervention of a higher culture. The driving out of peace is pretended to be for establishing peace—a war to end war—the righteous war, where the children, and the chaste, the sick, and the saints are asked to vacate, and escape from the weapons of war—this glorious evacuation and transplantation of a moving mass of helpless humanity.

There is indeed here discipline and order—not of the spirit but of the dead leaves—a dead and passive military order, the exterior uniformity exemplified so beautifully by the neat alignment of the roofs of dry and dead leaves of the camp. What about man and his mind? It is all a confusion of seas.

Then comes the surfeit of civilisation symbolised by the elephant standing at the junction of forked roads. It refuses but it has to be actually goaded on to eat its luxurious morsel with the chanting of mantras in a foreign tongue-perhaps the lingua franca of India, in which the elephants are also trained to find a larger market for the elephants of Tamiḻakam—the mean lucre of the market place creating this artificial conversation in a foreign dialect—not the universal communication with higher souls but a blabbering with the beasts. What a contrast again between this overfed elephant and the extirpated cave dwellers of the forest! In this artificial life, it is

no wonder that the very thorns so much abhorred are carefully brought, and nurtured as the living fortress.

Even amidst this surfeit and civilisation the austerity of war cannot be hidden. The tents peep up reminding us of the majestically flying ochre-dyed cloth of the Recluse of the forest. Perhaps it is an outward show. Along with this show of sacrifice, there is the implication of the basic equality of men. Death is the great leveller. The king is one with the soldiers; only a small screen separated them from him, and that too by common consent. Inspite of the military rule the camp is a democracy of hearts. Except for the outward show of a painting on the screen there is nothing to distinguish the king's apartment from that of the chieftains and his soldiers. By common consent and understanding one tent is set apart as that of the king. The kingship is resting on common consent but what consent! a consent to be killed.

II

Amidst this vast army of many tongues, and many ways, united in this carnival of destruction—so much fodder for the weapons of war, there are brought on the scene the girls of 12 or 13 years of the fragile and helpless fair sex. This excites the sympathy against war—what tiny napes! what beautiful tresses! what slender arms! what an artistically coloured breast bands! alas! bands only to carry the shining sword!! What a barbarism of combination! This beauty, youth and sex burn away with the lights of the camp, toiling unrelenting even in midnight. They must keep the light burning otherwise, woe to the whole army—to keep the outward lamp and not the inward light of lights. Perhaps these warriors are afraid of darkness: their internal darkness and desolation demand at least this slender hold and empty consolation of an external light.

But the lights are tired too. The bells are tired and fatigued and they die away. The men are reduced by their fatigue and overwhelming sleep—having spent many a sleepless night—to the condition of the immobile plants, all moving in a body this side and that as the wind blows them. It is not the mercenary alone but also the trusted and chosen body guards that droop, like this, though majestically, thanks to the past habit,

Man simply vegetates and has been mechanised, but he forgets not his duty. These watch-dogs, as though holding up the very last breath of their strength, go unconsciously swaying in their habitual majestic gait.

It is when the last dregs of this drink of military intoxication have been drunk, the victory of the whole world is foretold to the king, when there are but a few drops of water in the hour glass. Something in his harp of the heart resonates with this tune of this blessing. As though running away from it, he escapes into the interior recesses of his heart—his own apartment.

Everything has come to the breaking point. The foreigners of iron frame, with their armour and a whip round their waist—the whip and the "rule by might" go perhaps together—are in charge of the bodily comforts. There is nothing to be said of their minds. They continue as ever before. How can the foreigners feel for the dying men? Their beautiful chair of tiger-form still hangs there. It is not affected; it is not fatigued. Their arrangements have not changed, everything which has had any sign of life, or movement has been affected. Only the dead metal remains unchanged with its impression of a living art. Perhaps art is something immortal. But there is no time for a peep at this art. It is a fashion and no more. We are reminded of Hardy comparing the steadfastness of mute insensate things with man's agonies and giving his apprehension that man's power of feeling and thought, brings with them a unique capacity for suffering in this world of inscrutable laws. The art drives him in. The light—not the dimming and dying, lamps already seen—but now the reflected light of the crystals, sheds its lustre. Is it an echo within—an interior reflection—an underground resonance? The screen is cunningly withdrawn by an artifice of a string. There appears a room within a room—this is the naked reality of strategy and watchfulness of war.

Complete isolation is reached by the most gregarious animal-man. It looks as though he is jumping out of himself and running away from himself. Man here refuses to hear his own voice or the voice of others, the very man who started life babbling on his mother's lap, so accustomed to loving to hear his own voice. How sweet is the mother-tongue in a foreign land! But, alas! speech here means a leakage of mili-

tary secret, and spells death to the whole army and state. It is a land of spies. The speech on which man prides—the vehicle of culture and civilisation—is silenced. Man is interlocked with the dumb, almost dead to the world. This reminds us of the nihilism of modern poetry. The mind of the hero has retraced all these steps of his thought. His is perhaps silenced by an inner voice. But the struggle is not yet over. The unquenchable thirst for more and more offensive wars—'dig-vijaya'—gives him no sleep. But the struggle becomes keener between this universal hegemony and his inner voice. The fire of war outside has kindled a fire of war inside his mind.

III

What are the motive forces of man driving him to the brink of death in war? The happiness of the embrace of the beloved and the satisfaction of protecting the hearth, come uppermost in the hero's mind. But what does he find? There is the valiant elephant, the mountain of tactual sensation to be tingled, and yet its pain of the piercing javelin is so unbearable that it forgets its beloved queens. Heroism and gratitude—the highest of human virtues—are these left to grow in a world of war, as is claimed by the jingoism of Von Bernhardt? Alas! these virtues are disappearing from the world with the grateful warriors 'Oḻintōr' (ஒழிந்தோர்) leaving the world poorer. Is it the survival of the fittest or the survival of the most unfit? The life, the sweet life, for which one undertakes all the activities of the world, and to protect which he bears the cross of the sword goes out alike with the other lamps of this tent. But like the meanest of the mean, the dumb animals may be satisfied with little crumbs of food, and this appetite for food or a living is indeed the basic force of a living being. It may drive one to war. Food and other enjoyments inspire us to great activities and adventures. But is this appetite at least satisfied in this war—if not love, life and glory? When pain overpowers one, as it must in any war, there comes no thought of food—nay, one refuses like the horses on the battle-field to eat, though starving to death.

He ponders over these concrete situations of his war—his elephants, his warriors and his horses. What is there to be said in favour of his victory? No thought comes to him

that way. This is not the imagined picture of the vanquished foes but the actual experience of the victorious army of his camp—beasts and men identified with himself, the very life of his life, laying down their very lives for him. Much more so will be the slaughter inflicted on the poor defeated enemies and the beasts on the other side.

The fatigue, the exhaustion, the benumbing pain, the final silence of death—that is the progressive development of victory and war. This is the idea now rushing forth to his mind, quenching his thirst for war. He is helpless. He would have but for the cot, nearly collapsed and laid prostrate on the ground, crushed down by these ponderous thoughts. He rests on the cot and presses down one of his hands on the bed, bearing the full weight of his aching and reeling head, adorned with the crown (the burden of the state and society) with the hand dazzling with the victorious shoulder band—the description of the band perhaps implies an ironical satire.

The thoughts, complicating so far, resolve themselves. He comes to the conclusion of peace, from a feeling of these revulsions to any further war. The crown weighs no more and the hand is released. The fingers wont to weild the arms raised against the enemies, ceasing to function that way, set aright the shining laurel slipping down. The true victory of the righteousness is won. He is a 'Jina'. The drum of victory sounds outside. At this, once again he realises the past acts which mean this victory, probably at the break of day. The idea of cruelty and futility of war makes him quake within himself. Here is an earth-quake of sovereignty but at the sight of the past and not of the future. The hero must start home without any more wars.

IV

This is the picture of her lord, which her intuition elaborates before her mind's eye, as her mind hovers about the camp. She does not see her lord, wont to sleep like a dead log, without any care in his happy contentment, as portrayed again and again by her attendants. Therefore it is, that she does not see as they see.

This inner struggle, this volcanic eruption in the mind, she also feels. Her mind with its steadying influence has been guided by her to go on its way to his camp; it is not

now with her to support and give her strength. Even as Nakkīrar has described, she acts as he acts, thinks as he thinks, and feels as he feels. What is said of him ('Neṭitu niṉaitu' நெடிது நினைந்து—pondering for long) is but a reflection of what is said of her 'Nīṭu niṉaintu' நீடு நினைந்து 'Paṉikkum' பனிக்கும் 'shuddering' refers to him; 'Naṭuṅki' (நடுங்கி) refers to her; only this time this echo is elaborated with the simile of pierced peacock at this end. If the laurel slips there down his head, the jewels slip away here from her. The heroine stands perplexed and heaves a deep sigh; though there is no corresponding confusion and a deep sigh, at the other end, one has to take them as implied. He has to rest on his bed; she also lies prostrate on her bed.

This is indeed a great poetic situation, handled by a great master. The beauty of the Vision is therefore incomparable. Suffering more than happiness attracts us to its bewitching poetic beauty. "Beauty of whatever kind" says Poe, "in its supreme development invariably excites sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all poetical tones." But poetry ought not to end in a vacuum. Even tragedy holds up the hope of a poetic justice.

The struggle comes to an end. It is here that 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' differs from the nihilism of modern poetry. There is a brightening up. The light beams up; it glows all the brighter —a poetical way of reminding us of the peace and light. There is a calm. She comes back to herself. The gloom disappears. The glories of the palace, all hidden within the internal gloom now strikes the eye. The seven storeyed palace, rises in all its grandeur, in the sudden flash of a lightning. She listens intensively. There is the rain. She is a musician. To the varying tunes on the higher and lower octaves of the increasing and decreasing rain water, she is listening almost concentrated thereon. This itself shows that the war is over. She is at peace with herself. Does something unconscious tell her that he is coming back? Is it this that she is intensely listening to, through all this music and noise of the rain water? The various conjunctive particles mark the varying stages of her feeling; and finally the internal peace restored, sends her to enjoy the music of the waters with such concentration. The heroine is listening to something deeper there—the inner truth of the unconscious blossoming

of the heart intuitively feeling his physical approach. She is all ears and the innermost recesses of her ear, resonate with the tune of the incoming horse of the hero. Perhaps it is better to speak of the superconscious than of the unconscious.

V

If the heroine is thinking of the hero, is not the hero thinking of the heroine? The rule of war, not the outward regulation but its inner spirit, requires that he should not dissipate the concentrated military reasoning and watchful strategy of war, by any other thought. (Tol. 1021). The spirit and practice of war, drive the thought of the heroine into his unconscious mind. But this will be trying to rush up to the conscious level deceiving the censor in some other form. The highest perfection of personality is reached, when this thought or feeling, struggling for expression, is sublimated to an adorable form as to appear at the conscious level. There the conscious mind and the unconscious mind become one; there is no more the split personality.

Is it not this that has happened? The feeling of a revulsion of war worthy of an Asōka, the sympathy for the death, the suffering and the disabled worthy of a Buddha, the overflowing kindness worthy of a Christ, the final moral victory worthy of a Mahāvīra, all occurring on the battle-field worthy of a Kṛṣṇa—these constitute in reality the universal love—the sublimation of the love for the woman into divine love, reminding us of the sublimation of Dante's love for his Beatrice into his mystic love.

Here are placed before us, the mental development and the spiritual evolution of the hero. Has the heroine attained this sublimation and evolution? There is no difficulty in answering the question in the affirmative. The conception of 'Mullai' demands it. Is not this the picture, the mental vision of the heroine, made possible by her love of spiritual progress through a process of sublimation of the passions? Supression of the passion is never a success, only sublimation is. It is through her vision, on the theory of Nakkīrar, that, in idealised love, the lovers think and feel alike, we conclude that the hero should have been thinking in that strain, and that the heroine has intuitively felt his thoughts and feelings. Her perfection is what we know; his perfection is an inference therefrom.

VI

Before we pass on, the feeling of Asōka as described in his famous Rock Edict XIII may be studied because of its immense interest. If, as the present writer feels, the Caṅkam age is nearer Asōka, this 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' may be itself a poetic flower blooming in the land and atmosphere nurtured by the great Emperor. The Edict runs thus:

"The Kaliṅgas were conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty, the King, when he had been consecrated eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, many times that number perished.

"Directly after the annexation of the Kaliṅgas began his Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Piety, his love of that law, and his giving instruction in that Law (Dharma). Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kaliṅgas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered, involves the slaughter, death and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty.

"There is, however, another reason for His Sacred Majesty feeling still more regret inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmins or ascetics or men of various denominations, or house-holders, upon whom is laid this duty of hearkening to teachers, and proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves, and servants, with fidelity of attachments. To such people in such a country, befalls violence of slaughter, or separation from their beloved ones. Or, misfortune befalls the friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives of those who are themselves well protected, while their affection is undiminished. Thus, for them also, that is a mode of violence. All these several happenings to men are matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty because it is never the case that people have not faith in some one denomination or other.

"Thus of all the people who were then slain, done to death, or carried away captive in the Kaliṅga if the hundredth or the thousandth part were to suffer the same fate, it would now be a matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty. Moreover should any one do him wrong, that too must be borne with by His sacred Majesty if it can possibly be borne with. Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His Sacred Majesty

looks kindly, and he seeks their conversion; (for if he did not), repentance would come upon His Sacred Majesty. They are bidden to turn from evil ways that they be not chastised. For His Sacred Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind and joyousness.

"And this is the chiefest conquest in the opinion of His Sacred Majesty—the conquest of Law of Piety—and this again, has been won by His Sacred Majesty, both in his own dominion and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues—where the Greek (Yona) king named Antiochus (King of Syria B.C. 261) dwells and north of that Antiochus, to where dwell the four kings, severally named Ptolemy, (King of Egypt B.C. 285-247), Antigones, (King of Mactonia B.C. 277-239), Magas, (King of Cyrenes B.C. 258), Alexander, (King of Epirus, B.C. 272-258), and in the south (the realms of the) Cōḻas and Pāṇḍyas with Ceylon like-wise and here too, in the King's dominions among the Yonas, and Kambojas, among Nabhapamtis of Nabhaka, among Bhōjas and Pitinikas (Paithan on the Gōdāvari) among the Āndhras and Pulindas—everywhere men follow His Sacred Majesty's instruction in the Law of Piety. Even where the envoys of His Sacred Majesty's do not penetrate there too men hearing His Sacred Majesty's ordinance based on the Law of Piety and his instruction, in that Law practise and will practise the Law.

"And again, the conquest thereby won everywhere is everywhere a conquest full of delight. Delight is found in the conquest made by the Law. That delight, however, is only a small matter. His Sacred Majesty regards as bearing much fruit only that which concerns the other world.

"And for this purpose has this pious edict been written in order that my sons and grandsons, who may be, should not regard it as their duty to conquer a new conquest. If perchance they become engaged in a conquest by arms, they should take pleasure in patience and gentleness and regard as (the only true) conquest won by piety—that avails for both this world and the next. Let all joy be in the effort because that avails for both this world and the next."

VII

What Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ condemns as so extraneous and so elaborately described as to meet with his disapproval, turns

out to be the very heart of this poem, revealing to us in the most concrete poetic form the highest conception and spiritual significance of 'Mullai'. 'Vañci' and 'Mullai' meet here both externally, and internally. 'Mullai' sublimates the physical victory into a moral and spiritual victory. The righteous indignation of Vañci, fights with higher obstacles and raises the love and feeling of identity to universal consciousness. It is here that Mullai, comes to signify the internal victory or what we may describe in modern language, the victory of the integrated personality and the release of a 'Jīvanmukta.' The poetic vision of the 'Mullai' season and tract, as realised and described by Na-p-pūtaṉār in this poem, implies this great truth.

The poem opens with a significant simile. The Dwarf realises his purpose of extracting a gift and the revolution begins. Everything is caught within his feet. The whole world is encompassed by him, now attaining universal proportions. This is what the nucleus of a cloud also does. Does not this outward Nature reflect correctly the inward feeling of this poem. The nucleus of love starts with an outward struggle of anger and heroism; a spiritual revolution is effected during its physical victory, and it is developed into the universal consciousness. In thus explaining these opening lines one is following the best traditions of Indian commentators trying to show that the opening verse suggests in a summary way the subject matter of the whole poem.

This nucleus of love, not as something great and valuable to be found in the hero's or heroine's mind, but as something fundamental and basic for Man, to be found in every man and every woman is shown in its concrete form in the description of the shepherd lass speaking with sympathy to the calves when the attendants of the heroine moved by the same love and sympathy, but in their case towards the heroine, go to the outskirts of the city to divine a verbal omen. It is the same love and sympathy that drive them to console her by describing the war and the hero from many points of view, so as to emphasise his certain victory, his amassing of wealth for her, and his immediate return, which according to them are what an ordinary heroine ought to expect. But as already seen, these do not appeal to the heroine who has attained a higher level of ethical perfection; and her vision, therefore,

encompassing in a way the whole world, is in reality a progressive evolution of the supreme love.

VIII

The return of the hero comes with an explosive joy, but in the development of love hinted in the previous passages, our mind has been, without our knowing it, shaped to expect this. But all the same, the joyful surge must be allowed to spread itself out, as a universal happiness, to relieve us of the tension of sudden joy so that when we come to the end of the poem, we may experience not the tumult of the passion even if it be a tumult of joy but the satisfying equilibrium of the mental peace. It is this that is attempted in the closing sentence describing the victorious return of the hero and his army.

The conquest of the lands, is here made, not his glory but that of his swarming army. With resounding conches and trumpets and the banner of victory proudly flying aloft, the army rushes behind the hero, through the forest, on his way back to his heroine. It is not so much the return of the hero, as the return of the whole army, and she is glad of this joy, of the whole group including the horses. This is the picture of an ever expanding love.

This return through the forest, gives an opportunity to the poet for describing the 'Mullai' land—the land from which the heat has disappeared, the land made fertile and blooming with sprouts and flowers, by the rains, a replica of their pacified and loving minds without any anger or heat—a happy sight indeed to cool and pacify the heart and soul of the hero after the external and internal war he has fought.

The description bridges the gulf yawning between the battle-field and the sweet home. The forest to start with therefore continues to be reminiscent of the battle-field. There is the black spot or the darkness experienced. There is the gold amassed and there are the needy, begging for the gold with open hands. There is the blood and the bloody path. As Naccinārkkiniyar points out later on, this description is of the forest as it appears to the hero; and naturally the immediate memory colours his sight. This implies a great psychological truth. But the heart of the hero has been changed; therefore this is all an appearance without the real sting of

war; for that reason this is all the more beautiful like the war seen and enjoyed at a distance, from the highest peak of mountain, or enjoyed as a painted scene.

Perhaps the suppressed feeling of love for the heroine, is slowly being released by these sights, so suggestive of the collyrium of her eyes, her gold spots of beauty, her hand and her bleeding heart. In the forceful and the most decisive suggestion, of the loving couple of a reindeer and its mate, one reaches the climax of this part of the poem. Our reading, thus between the lines, the progressive unfolding of his suppressed but positive feeling for the heroine, is supported by the explicit statement of Naccinārkkiniyar, "malaiyāl taṇṇīrum pullum niṟaya-p-peṟṟu-p-puṇarntu tirīyum eṉṟa karupporuḷāl avaṟṟai-k-kaṇṭa aracaṉukku vēṭkai mikuṭi kūṟiṟṟu" *(மழையால் தண்ணீரும் புல்லும் நிறையப்பெற்றுப் புணர்ந்து திரியும் என்ற கருப்பொருளால் அவற்றைக் கண்ட அரசனுக்கு வேட்கை மிகுதி கூறிற்று.)*
"Blessed with plenty of water and grass, thanks to the rains, this description of the things on the land suggests, that on seeing this the king's passions will be kindled."

This kindled passion urges him, to leave the forest in haste, and to goad on the horses. The chariot and horses with all their pomp or artistic workmanship stand before the palace doors, with all that tumultuous joy of victorious return already referred to. This rhetorical inversion of the predicate is thus doubly significant in this poem, first relieving us at once of the tension of the volcanic eruption of the hero's mind and secondly relieving us of this very tension of the tumultuous joy of return, by spreading it out as the universal happiness, till the subject of the predicate appears on the very last foot of the poem.

CHAPTER VIII

PĀṬṬU OR THE GROWTH OF THE LONGER VERSE

I

Caṅkam age is not an age of epic; it is pre-eminently an age of occasional verses. The rise of longer poems or epics in this surroundings will be like the rise of a mountain in a sea of sand. The occasional verses have a development of their own; they grow in length. That is how the 'Ten Idylls' form a class by themselves, distinguished from the 'Eṭṭu-t-tokai' which contain only verses of smaller dimensions. The poetic moment will vanish into thin air, and the poet will slip into the arid prose—that fear seems to haunt the poets. A poetic process has been discovered against this fear. It is this process of elaboration without, however, taking any false step that is found here in 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' as in other composition of the 'Ten Idylls.' This successful development has made the longer poems possible in Tamiḻakam. 'Cilappatikāram' contains 30 songs (they were not called chapters as yet) connected in a temporal series; each song still continues to be like the occasional verse of the age, only a little longer. The importance of 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' in this development cannot be exaggerated. Its very success ushers in the age of the longer poem.

Even as Cilappatikāram is merely a collection of 30 long poems, the longer verse of the Idyll may be looked upon as a collection of the smaller verses of the age; but knit together into a greater unity. 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' divides itself into three sentences and each may be looked upon as a verse. The past and future meet in the present. The present, as William James has beautifully described it, is the commodious curved depth of the saddle, with the past and the future curving up on either side. It is the commodious present moment with its suggestive past and future becoming one with it, that is beautifully described as a unity in this poem. This great poetic panorama though implying a succession reveals only the intensity and depth of the feeling of the moment when the heroine's ear resonates with the joy of the home-returning horse. The poem it is true uses the verbs in the past tense; as the speech of the attendant on the heroine, it is the expression

of joy of the very moment of the return of the hero, and this joy by the time of expression has become the past; but as a continuous unity of experience it remains the commodious present. The poetic moment is thus much more extensively alive in 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' than in any occasional verse.

II

'Paripāṭal' is a music composition of some elaboration. 'Kali' verse also shows the way for the development of a theme. In that species of verse, there is the introduction or the opening 'Taravu' (தரவு); next comes the elaboration, development and complication, in 'Tāḻicai' (தாழிசை); it usually closes with its resolution of this complication in its conclusion or 'Curitakam' (சுரிதகம்) (Tol. 1389). There is also the musical tradition of the 'Kāntāra Mārkkam' (காந் தார மார்க்கம்) where the Tāḻicai, developed as a separate whole, is sung thrice in the same tune, but in three different verses, elaborating the same mood of love, in three different forms, the underlying unity being emphasised, by the repetition of ideas and words, the repetition thus marking and expressing the wonder of a resolving conflict. This development explains why Mullai-p-pāṭṭu also consists of three parts.

Music has shown the way to others as well. Dr. Eliot in the Music of Poetry writes: "I think that a poet may gain much from the study of music. How much technical knowledge of musical form is desirable, I do not know; for I have not that technical knowledge myself. But I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and sense of structure. I think that it might be possible for a poet to work too closely to musical analogies, the result might be an effect of artificiality, but I know that a poem or a passage of a poem, may tend to realise itself as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself. The use of the recurrent theme is as natural to poets as to music. There are possibilities for verse, which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements

of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject matter. It is in concert room rather than in the opera house, that the germ of the poem may be quickened."

Eliot's Quartets is based on the musical pattern. Kali has been elaborated on the pattern of the music of the Caṅkam age, and it is no wonder, that Nap-p-pūtaṉār follows this pattern of a musical triplet, in elaborating a scheme of verse. The opening swing and flare of the sea-like roar and thunder of the swelling rains slowly ebbing away into the gamakas or reverential but homely reverberations of the speech rhythm of the shepherd lass, and the doleful conversations of the palace ladies, finally close with 'tāḷa' of the sobbing of the queen. Next, these rumblings develop into a sea-like overflow of the marching military band to die away slowly with the tolling bells, into the significant pause, or vilambita of the King's cogitation. In the third part this vilambita heaves up into the victorious choir—a concert and a symphony of conches, trumpets, rustlings of trees and the contra dance of the loving deer, swell into the all pervasive joy of the victorious return of all the beasts, men, rumbling weapons and rolling chariots.

III

It is clear that this 'Mullai-p-pāṭṭu' is divided into three distinct forms or movements. The first part ends in 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)*; the second is another 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)*; the third forms the remainder of the poem. The repetition of the word 'Kāṇāḷ' *(காணாள்)* is significant in the light of the explanation given above.

In the first movement there is the back-ground of rain and its downpour leading on to the suffering of the calves, their rotatory motion of despair, like the ceaseless and meaningless but desperate acts of our civilisation—and closing down with the assurance that the cows will come soon—the message of hope delivered by the innocent and sympathetic heart, of the shepherd lass. The wonder of Nature, the perplexity and despair of the calf, and hopeful joy of the sympathetic lass—these form one whole, with the hope of the attendants. This message has to be divined and read as an omen—another positive evidence of the reign of suggestion in this poem.

The second movement is inward. It starts with the bustle and activity of the developing camp, slowly tiring itself out into the silence of the King's despondency with an inner glow, or sweet gamaka of joy and hope of moral and spiritual victory. The wonder of military art and strategy, the perplexity and the despondency of the king, and the internal hope and peace, born of his sympathy—these form into one whole with the hope of the loving queen.

The third movement starts with the reflected despondency transforming into the hope of the heroine—really a continuation of the second movement—leading through her self-surrender, and brightening up into an illumination and peace, and it then slowly heaves and spreads away as the joy of actual reunion, resonating everywhere in the forests and in the minds of all. The budding hope with its fading colour of despondency, the perplexity of the short-lived suspense, coloured by a growing hope and wonder of the universal joy—these form one whole with the hope and joy of all. The third movement unites both the inner vision and the outer phenomenon.

All the three movements form a higher unity of a progressive movement. The first is linked on to the second inasmuch as the attendants read and interpret the words of the shepherd lass as a good omen to the heroine, who however does not agree with them, and therefore proceeds to see another vision, this breaking away itself thus beginning the second movement. The second movement and the third movement as already hinted, are connected inasmuch as her feelings are found to be the reflections of the hero's feelings. Each movement represents thus a triplet.

The first part starts with the confusion of the rain and the perplexity of the calves redeemed by a message of hope. The second part is the inner struggle and victory. The third part ends with the resolution of the perplexity and struggle in joy and peace when the confusion of the rain is revealed as leading to the fertile forest in bloom and to the love dance of the deer. The struggle is the necessary pre-requisite for moral victory, even as the rain is the pre-requisite for the fertility and joy. The darkness at the end, brightens both within and without.

There are further correspondences. In the movement

there is the development of the rain without, and the development of the anxiety, sympathy and hope within. In the second movement there is the development of the military camp without, and the development of the loving anxiety, despondency, hope and victory within. In the third movement there is the development of the fertile and beautiful, living and loving forest without, and the development of the universal hope, peace and joy within.

The heroine connects all the three parts; she is the central figure. In the first part the heroine is shown to be something out of the ordinary. She does not run with the crowd thus sowing into our minds the seeds of great expectations. In the second part we see her inner vision. Intuition begins to work. There comes the spiritual revolution, something great as already expected. But this is purely mental; it may remain a cloister virtue. The outward success of this is seen in the third movement. She no more stands apart. She has become universalised. The joy of the whole group is her joy. She is now at peace with herself and the world—removing once for all the opening schism; it is all now one unbroken unity. In the first and second parts, we start from the noise and bustle and go deeper into the inner sympathy and hope. In the third part the scheme is reversed; not only for variation but also out of necessity. In the fruition of the action, the inner experience must find an outer expression. Therefore, from the inner silence, we come back to the actual joy of union.

IV

This Pāṭṭu is a song of emotions. The emotions are found concentrated in the series of images of the dark rising cloud perched on a peak, the roaring sea, the lass with the clasped hands, the calves moving in a circle, the pearl of tears, the reverential women on the outskirts of the city, the fortress of thorns, the fortification of ropes and bows, the sea of a camp, the recluse-like tents, the overfed elephant, the well aligned roofs, the fast flowing hour glass, the swords hanging from the breast-bands; the dying bells and lamps, the crystal light, the dumb attendants, the artistic bed-chamber, the heroic and grateful warriors laying down their lives; the horses refusing to eat, the elephant oblivious of its lovers, the pressure of the crown, the brushing up of the drooping laurel,

the shuddering of sovereignty at the sounding of its victorious drum, the prostration on the lonely cot, the shivering peacock, the Neñcāṟṟuppaṭai, the brightening up of the light, the sudden flash of lightning revealing the beauty of the palace, the music of the rain water, the multicoloured forest full of good omens like the hopeful message of the shepherd lass, the frisking deer, the fully ripe corn and the heigh-ho of the home-coming horse.

That this theme is not something insignificant and personal, but of universal importance, is suggested by the ocean simile *(பாடிமிழ் பனிக்கடல்)*'Pāṭimiḻ paṉikkaṭal' of the first part and the *(படுநீர்ப்புணரி)* 'Paṭuṉīr-p-puṇari' of the second. The vast expanse of the sea is very suggestive. In the third part this expanse pervades both within and without. Therefore, instead of the noun, the predicate Āliṉa *(ஆலின)* suggesting the pervasive and all encircling joyful roar of the sea is used instead of directly mentioning the sea which will be inappropriate as applied to the inner tranquillity of the recollected emotions. This idea of the sea is itself suggested by the military camp in the second part. This idea of war is suggested in the first part itself, where the description of the clouds perching on a peak, reminds us of an army forcibly capturing a mountain, and from that strategical position starting its military activities. The final part openly mentions the army, the army returning from a successful war, the army of joy and peace.

The opening mythological image itself works as a charm. The myth of Trivikrama is considered to be a Sun myth—the expression of the wonder and awe and beauty of the morning Sun growing from small appearances to great proportions—crossing the sky in two strides, making the darkness disappear in no time, of its own accord as it were. According to Jung, this may represent the libido, and the conquering humanity sublimating it. The story has a special and unique appeal to Āḻvārs who are moved to divine ecstasy and self forgetfulness at this idea of God in His unfathomably deep love coming into physical contact with every living being, nay with every particle alive or dead—the divine embrace like a mother's, drawing every one within itself regardless of one's sin or worth. The terrific wonder of sudden transformation thus holds forth the deepest universal love. If there is

any doubt about this signification of the opening lines, that is cleared away completely by the interpretation of the closing lines. The universality and the mysticism of the poem are clear.

There is one other remark to be made about the images. The images are all visual like the colour of the cloud, and the flowers, the definite shape of the lass, and the Ionions, the tiger chain, the doll lamp, the tent, the forest and the road; or they are aural like the roar of the sea, the sound of the trumpet, the conch, the drum, and the horse and in a negative way the silence of the bells—all appealing to the two great vivid and definite sense organs of man. "The sense of taste and smell, however, are the most immediate and least translatable to intellectual terms by the conscious mind", and the appeal in these immediate senses comes only when the heroine's grief becomes poignant—if we leave out of account the symbolic Mullai referred to at the beginning itself. In the inner vision of the heroine the fragrance of the Piṭavu is referred to as also the tasteful sweet luxury of the elephant's meal. The one is uprooted, the other is brushed aside; and this treatment creates the real poignancy. Absence more than presence, or rather negation more than affirmation, heightens the emotional appeal in the atmosphere of the dimming lights, dying bells, and the fast flowing hour glass and above all of the conquered temptation of the soft and inviting bed of sweet sleep, after all the deadening fatigue.

V

This elaboration and organisation have left a mark on the outward form of this poem. The three movements, here are, if one may use the terminology of Miltonic prosody, three verse paragraphs. But to keep up the older tradition of one poem, and to knit the ideas more closely together, the first and second verse paragraphs do not end in "end stop lines". The second verse paragraph starts with the last foot of the first. So does the third verse paragraph.

The end stop lines, have, by their repeated monotony emptied the last feet of their significance, but the run on lines by this new process of continuity, refill the last foot of a line with significance and emphasis. Assonance is here used not for creating any pattern but for emphasis. It looks as though

we hear the jerk of the thought itself by this kind of emphasis. 'Cōṟu vāyttu oḻintōr uḷḷiyum' *(சோறுவாய்த்து ஒழிந்தோர் உள்ளியும்)* refers to the thought of the heroes. 'Toṟumipu' *(தோறுமிபு)* is the last foot there. By mere association of assonance the thought moves on to the horses. There is a broken construction purposely introduced to give a ring of reality to the hero's cogitation or ponderous thoughts.

'Piṭi-k-kaṇam maṟanta vēḻam' *(பிடிக்கணம் மறந்த வேழம்)* has no verbal link with what follows. It stops with a sudden jerk in the middle of a line. To balance this, there starts a new thought, suggested by mere association of assonance *(வேழம், வேழத்தின்)* 'Vēḻam, vēḻattiṉ'. The slipping away from one thought into another, is equally emphasised by the last foot 'Kaluḻ ciṟantu *(கலுழ் சிறந்து)* in line 62, 'Tuyaruḻantu' *(துயருழந்து)* in line 80, 'Iḻai nekiḻntu' *(இழை நெகிழ்ந்து)* in line 84.

This study of the technique of verse, according to Dr. Eliot, is real criticism. "Hence in criticising poetry, we are right if we begin with that sensibility and what knowledge of other poetry we possess with poetry as excellent words in excellent arrangement and excellent metre" (The Sacred Wood). It is not something extrinsic; it is the main attraction to many poets like Robert Bridge. "What led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form—the magic of speech lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the material." The leader of modern versification Hopkins confesses: "But as air, melody is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or, what I call, *inscape* is what I above all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer." Need it be a vice? Mullai-p-pāṭṭu shows it need not be.

From this point of view, the poem may be studied with great interest. Every line breaks up at the middle, into two; probably this is the natural rhythm of the idiom of that age. The assonance helps to group the lines in couplets and in emphatic single lines and other such interesting musical groups, varying with the idea but always following the hidden emotional pattern, that makes poetry.

To help the sound echo the sense, more direct methods have been adopted by our poet. In describing the elastic

heaving up of Viṣṇu, the poet uses the lengthening of the long vowel in addition to the long vowels themselves. In 'Nīr cela nimirnta Māal pōla' (நீர் செல நிமிர்ந்த மாஅல் போல) the lengthening of the vowel echoes the sense of the lengthening of His form. The doleful despondency of the ponderous thought is described by the long-drawn vowel and nasals which are sung on, only to be quickly followed at the end of the line by surds coming to echo the breathlessness. 'Uṉṉātuyaṅkum mā cintittum' (உண்ணா துயங்கும் மா சிந்தித்தும்). The reflected despondency of the queen is described in a line, 'Maiyal koṇṭum oyyeṉa uyirttum' (மையல் கொண்டும் ஒய்யென உயிர்த்தும்) resonating with the sense. The cruel and brutal war against the hunters is expressed by the numerous explosives exploding like the batterings on the fortresses, 'Vēṭṭu-p-pulaiyaruppam māṭṭi-k-kāṭṭa' (வேட்டுப் புழை யருப்பம் மாட்டிக் காட்ட). The resulting safety is echoed by 'Iṭu mutpuricai yēmuṟa vaḷaii' (இடு முட்புரிசை யேமுற வளைஇ).

Here also the principle of contrast is used. The ideas are by these oxymorons, very well impressed in our minds. E.g. 1. பெரும்பெயல் சிறுபுன் மாலை 'Perumpeyal ciṟupuṉ mālai'. 2. அருங்கடி மூதூர் மருங்கிற் போகி 'Aruṅkaṭi mūtūr maruṅkiṟpōki.' 3. பூப்போல் உண்கண் புலம்புமுத் துறைப்ப 'Pūp pōl uṇkaṇ pulampumut tuṟaippa'. 4. அரும்பு அவிழ் 'Arumpaviḻ'. 5. இரவு பகல் 'Iravu pakal'. 6. முனைகவர்ந்து வினைமுடித்து 'Muṉai kavarntu viṉai muṭittu'. 7. மறிந்து வீங்கு செறிவுடை 'Maṟintu vīṅku ceṟivuṭai'. 8. இடுமுள் ஏமுற 'Iṭumuḷ ēmuṟa' and 9. சிறு கண் யானை 'Ciṟu kaṇ yāṉai.

In other cases when same or similar words are repeated there is an emphasis:

1. வேறுபல் பெரும்படை — 'Vēṟupal perumpaṭai'.
2. நல்ல நல்லோர் — 'Nalla nallōr'.
3. பெருமூ தாளர் — 'Perumū tāḷar'.
4. பெருமுது பெண்டிர் — 'Perumutu peṇṭir'.
5. விசய வெல்கொடி — 'Vicaya velkoṭi'.

In still other cases even when the same or similar words are repeated, there is a slight change in the compounding of words, suggesting a deeper significance almost a different vision bringing out fully the unity and variation, the development and consummation of these ideas. The same words in

a different setting take on a different rhythm and significance. This is beautifully illustrated by the juxtaposition of the two words (கையள் கைய) 'Kaiyaḷ kaiya' describing the hands of shepherd lasses and the lads. 'Naṭuṅku cuval acaitta kaiyaḷ' (நடுங்கு சுவல் அசைத்த கையள்) describing the shivering lass, is contrasted with 'Kaiya koṭuṅkōl kōvalar' (கைய கொடுங்கோல் கோவலர்) describing the shepherds of the cruel staff,—the whole portrays the women and men in varying ways discharging the same duty of protecting the herd—Here is a beautiful inward picture of the sexes. 1. முக்கோல் அசைநிலை 'Mukkōl acainilai', a description of the tent and 2. அதிரல் பூத்த ஆடுகொடிப் படாஅர் சிதர்வரல் அசைவளிக் கசைவந்தாங்கு 'Atiral pūtta āṭukoṭi-p-paṭāar citarvaral acaivaḷi-k-kacaivan tāṅku', a description of the sleeping dance of the bushes in the wind, create two different pictures of sacrifice, and of fatigue. பாடிமிழ் பனிக்கடல் 'Pāṭimiḻ paṉikkaṭal' describing the seas in the cool-singing mother of the cloud and the படுநீர்ப்புணரி 'Paṭunīr-p-puṇari' describing the confusing noisy expanse of the camp, are also similarly contrasted. The static ஓடாவல்வில் 'Oṭāval vil' and encircling வாங்குவில் 'Vaṅkuvil' work by the magic of contrast suggested by the first words of the compound. நெடிதுநினைந்து 'Neṭituniṉaintu' of the hero is a horizontal lengthening of thought. நீடுநினைந்து 'Nīṭu niṉaintu' of the heroine is the vertical lengthening or deepening of the intensity of feeling. In அரணம் அரணமாக 'Araṇam araṇa māka' the first word emphasises the improvising; the second its success. In வேழம் வேழத்து 'Vēḻam vēḻattu' we have the contrast of the conqueror and the conquered. காட்டவும் காட்டவும் காணாள் 'Kāṭṭavum kāṭṭavum kāṇāḷ', expresses the futility of the attempts; இன்துயில் வதியுநற்காணாள் 'Iṉtuyil vatiyunaṟkāṇāl' expresses the climax of her vision. One is negative, the other is positive. The subtlety of this poetical art making use of the same words with a slight change in the make up of the phrase is marvellous.

With reference to one of the various forms of assonance, rhyme, Davidson claims this method as a discovery of Edgar Allan Poe and he waxes eloquent over it.

"Rhyme is originally a property of decadence, and where new decay demands expression, a new order of rhyme is

certainly evolved. The form of reaction of rhyme which I have used in some of the eclogues in this volume comes of course from America, the exquisite invention of the most original genius, in words the world had ever known—Edgar Allan Poe. It is impossible to overestimate the intensity of the mood in which the poet discovered that the same word can rhyme to itself on the entirely new sound, if the preceding phraseology is changed; this is the intensity that gilds the autumn leaf that emigrates to America and establishes the United States; that crimsons the evening sky, that crosses the Atlantic to haunt Europe passionately, that fills a dying fancy with the whole past in a moment of time". Here is Poe's success.

> It was hard by the dim lake of Auber
> In the misty mid region of weir
> It was down by the dank town of Auber,
> In the ghost haunted woodland of weir.

Yamakam and maṭakku are known to Tamil land, but the beauty which Davidson speaks of, is also the beauty of Mullai-p-pāṭṭu.

CHAPTER IX

MANTIRAM

I

Some may feel that more is read into the poem than what is actually contained in it. There is certainly in this poem more than what meets the ear. This is not doubtful psycho-analysis. Suggestion is the very life of poetry. How else can its charm of enchantment be created except by this magic of suggestion? The poet, to inspire the minds of his audience with noble feelings and ideals, rich experiences and vivid imaginations, has to work with the crude and pointless tools of words which unfortunately have no feeling or ideal, no experience or imagination, of their own. The word, 'sugar' cannot taste sweet, but yet it has, by some magic to bring the taste of sugar to the tongue of the reader's mind. To the extent poet's art of suggestion is successful, his poetry is also successful.

In addition to the direct meanings, there are the various nuances of indirect meanings, suggesting the varying shades of feelings. Tolkāppiyar refers to the indirect meaning as 'Kuṟippu' (Tol. 642) and to the suggestion as the five shades of 'Uḷḷuṟai', உள்ளுறை what resides beneath the surface (Tol. 994) and as 'Iṟaicci' இறைச்சி which is according to Naccinārkkiniyar 'Karupporuḷ' the birds, the plants, the animals, and the men, occupying and giving life and personality to any place or time. These are as already noted, called the womb strata of poetry. According to this commentator these may imply an inner meaning and a suggestion. The commentator has already referred to the passionate suggestion of the reindeer and its loving mate.

The method of the interpretation here followed in our essay, is, in one sense, the method what one follows in reading Eliot's poems. Eliot leaves the forcible statement of facts to evoke emotion with a minimum of explicit correlation. In Eliot's poetry "the mood is too complex for initial statement but is the implied resultant of the whole poem and is often not formulated until the close. Hence the final emergence of harmony of heterogeneity is entirely dependent upon a clear

concatenation of imagery." But Mullai-p-pāṭṭu like Dante's poetry shows no heterogeneity. To the extent of the concatenation of imagery evoking emotion, we are referring to Eliot's poetry for comparison. Underneath the surface description runs a deeper and more intense current of sublimated feelings. It is this we have tried to bring up to the open.

Pērāciriyar brings this suggestion under 'Nōkku' "the vision of poetry,"—one of the constituents of literary compositiotn. (Tol. 1259). Tolkāppiyar contemplates tiers of meanings, one stratum appearing below the other. (Tol. 1174-75). Though his theory of suggestion has yet to be worked out completely, it is clear that suggestion is the very life of poetry in his theory, as much under the Dvani theory of Ānandavardhana. Naccinārkkiniyar is, therefore, following the best traditions of the Tamil Country when he brings out the suggestion of the closing lines of the poems, in kindling the passion of the hero. Our reading of the whole poem is the natural development of Naccinārkkiniyar's theory of this interpretation.

II

This is not something unknown to the Western world. The Symbolists and Imagists, rely upon this power of suggestion. In modern poetry Eliot's "Wasteland" and the "Four Quartets" are famous for this power of suggestion. Prof. Richards may dissolve the aesthetic experience to the various levels of response, evaluating them, according to his recipe of value of organising our emotions, but his emphasis, being on the unimportance of the sense of words, must be on the force of suggestion working out the various ramifications of meaning, which he weaves out, on his theory of psychology.

Nor is his a modern trend. Dante (in his Convivio) distinguishes the four values or interpretations of literature—the literal, the allegoric, the moral (the three already known to us) and the anagogic, the last occurring when a writing is spiritually expounded, which even in the literal sense by the very things it signifies, signifies higher matters of external glory. These four can be looked upon as three strata of meaning, the literal appearing on the surface, the moral underlying it, and the mystic shining down in the very heart

of it, the latter two working on the principle of allegory or உள்ளுறை 'Uḷḷuṟai'. Here the whole of human experience, intellectual, sensual, moral and spiritual, becomes of equal and contemporaneous importance, in becoming the theme of poetry, resulting in a desirable continuity or coherence; the imagination, contemplation, and sensibility becoming fused with the perfect limits of a human mind—a coherence unknown to the modern mind. The modern mind is conscious of the divorce of personality from the process of its thought radiating from, and returning to, one minute centre of self, and as Read points out, "the modern poet, becomes, therefore desparate and insignificant in the process of nature and hence a prey to acedia and despair", whereas in Dante and Na-p-pūtaṉār, thought is the expression of experience reducing its thoughts to the emotional unit of a poem, making even metaphysics itself poetic.

Mullai-p-pāṭṭu may be said to possess these three levels—firstly the literal level of the rain, the forest, the evening, the midnight, the camp, the hero and the heroine; secondly the moral level of the sublimation of the mind after the internal struggle, revealing a moral victory, and thirdly the mystic level where the whole poem illustrates the pilgrim's progress—a bold interfusion of thought and actuality. Nakkīrar's philosophy of 'Aṉpu', interpreting 'Tamiyar' தமியர் 'all alone' as implying self-surrender and following the path of God or Nature (பால்வழி ஓடி 'Pālvaḻi ōṭi'), in addition to his suggestion of Advaitic relationship already noted, implies this mystic significance, the illumination and joy and final peace, after the feeling of separation in the dark chamber, and in the valley of Death of the mystics. It is because of this mystic value of Aka-p-pāṭṭu or "Lovers' Songs" that Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite seers of the post Caṅkam period have adopted this idiom in their Tirumuṟais and Nālāyira-p-pirapantam. What W. W. Jackson (Introduction to Dante's Convivus) says of Dante may explain Nappūtaṉār from this point of view. "The poet was inspired with an overmastering desire to link the present with the past, and with the future, to blend all knowledge into one coherent system, and to bring the experience of life, into one harmonious whole. For this purpose, allegory was an indispensable instrument. But the existence of facts for the allegory is the agency by which earthly passion is brought

into relation with Philosophy and Theology and becomes their servant and interpreter." The commentaries of Nālāyira-p-pirapantam especially the Īṭu on Nammāḻvar bring out the mystic significance of this kind of erotic poetry, which is really esoteric poetry.

III

Here is the magic of compression in poetry. It works up a simultaneity making possible the co-presence, in our mind of a number of different activities, fundamental attitudes and orders of experience. It is the depth of orchestration that allows these to move in and out of one another, the predominance shifting from level to level.

This condensation is made possible as already seen, by a peculiar usage of imagery. The pictures of scenery coming in poetry are more than portraits; they are symbols. An oft-noticed scene cherished up all along in the recesses of his heart springs up with a new message in the mind of the poet, and he uses it in his poetry at the opportune moment. Is this not true even of fables and proverbs, not to speak of the creations of artists like Naṭarāja? Art is always struggling against a stream of mere phenomena in order to create life. Poetry often communicates in this way simply and directly experiences that are not directly communicable in ordinary language. "Nature may indeed have her sublime moments but I think if any one can be sure of seizing their sublimity and fixing it, it is he who has plumbed them with imagination or with genius and has them expressed with sang froid," says Bidervt. "Imagery", says Spencer, "is the urgent medium by which experience holds our attention. It is the vision of the history of the race and of life and death, mere rough signs only but all the same, they help to show that certain conclusions can be drawn if the hypothesis is accepted, that literature is a means of understanding the profoundest and most moral changes in the human mind. The poet must, therefore, be conscious of the profound significance and meaning of imagery and his imagery must be true."

IV

The Caṅkam poets specialised in writing every verse as a dramatic speech. This is their special technique of catching the poetic moment. This technique especially as it is deve-

loped into longer and longer verses in Pattuppāṭṭu may be compared usefully with certain modern techniques of the Twentieth Century.

The technique Joyce employs in his Ulysses is as modern as the sky-scrapers. There is no plot or conventional development, crisis or resolution bringing the characters into sufficiently testing circumstances. There, the description is not purely introductory: description itself becomes revelation of character. One Mr. Blum is seen throughout one day of his life, but that one day's action includes thought retrospect and anticipation. Every action is conditioned by previous history. When the past impinges on the present, it is given free play. The present is illuminated by the past; and both fuse in Blum's consciousness. Fullness of implication is combined with accuracy and abundance of illuminating detail. Joyce is letting Blum's character build itself with words; but that character is not an unlocalised chain; it is a chain in a very definite social environment with very definite relation to other characters. The resulting portrait is essentially one that rises for contemplation. Blum projects himself on a screen for our contemplation. Aspects of experience have been selected and united so as to make life complete.

The orthodox writer selects and treats his material:

(1) *In time*: giving a series of events chronologically;

(2) *In space*: dealing with events in definite localities;

(3) *In relevance*: to what he considers important or significant or universal in human life. Joyce manages to transcend the time dimension and by careful use of psychological fact fuses past, present and future into a point as it were. As the dimension follows and depends on time in the sense that you can only be at one place, at one time, this implies also to some extent an emancipation from the tyranny of place. As to relevance to significant experience, Joyce takes the line of least resistance by surrendering his judgment to experience itself.

It is not necessary to refer to Joyce's new and dangerous treatment of language. From what has been said the poet of Mullai-p-pāṭṭu has also transcended the three dimensions in his own way by following the technique of a dramatic speech.

The art of Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories is also relevant. Her short Stories are attempts at getting the deepest truth out of the idea from imaginative study of a single situation—not the truth for the out-siders but the truth for the characters themselves. The whole purpose of the story with its carefully chosen setting and detailed description is to bring out the meaning not of anything external but with reference to the truth of the experience. Avoiding the external approach the authoress takes the meaning of the situation on its potentialities for change in the lives of the characters in so far as such a change has reference to aspects of experience known and appreciated by feeling and suffering of beings in general. "The truth of the idea meant to Mansfield the meaning of the situation for those concerned in it and this had implications far beyond the individual instance though these implications were not stressed or commented on: this meaning she nearly always saw as involving a kind of change." The story "The Singing Lesson" for instance, describes the mood of a singing teacher giving her lesson in school after receiving a letter that morning from her fiance breaking off the engagement and concludes with her sudden change of mood after receiving a telegram telling her to pay no regard for the letter. This stress on the significance of change comes in again and again. The main point in Mullai-p-pāṭṭu is also the significant change amounting to a conversion.

One way of getting the deepest truth of the idea is like Joyce's to put extended comment into the mind of the character affected, so that everything relevant is said, the meaning stated and the part brought out. The author may not be expressing any judgment on Value directly; but all the same the meaning is explicitly though indirectly stated, as coming into the plane of the consciousness of the character concerned. Katherine never states the meaning. This meaning, the very life of the story is suggested not stated. Her endeavour is to put the story in a position to illuminate itself; the parts throw light on the whole and the whole throws light on the parts so that, for example, the change at the end puts new meaning into what has gone before, putting everything into a new perspective which we had not been aware of until we arrived at the end. Can we not say the same of the author

of Mullai-p-paṭṭu itself, thanks to his following the technique of the dramatic speech? It is because the change and its significance are not explicitly stated but suggested, that the interpretation of the poem has become a problem to the later day world. Once however, the technique is understood, the meaning becomes crystal clear.

The poem reveals the great art of Na-p-pūtaṉār. Is he the great Āḻvār Pūtattār? Perhaps he is not. Āḻvār belongs to Toṇṭai Nāṭu whilst our poet to Cōḻanāṭu its very capital. But he is as great as the Āḻvār. He has seen a vision which the Āḻvār describes in his first verse of the Antāti, the inner light of divine love. (Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti 2). He makes us see the vision, being conscious of the transitoriness of the beings who hold the vision, and of the spiritual and moral significance of the vision itself. What Dr. Eliot says of Dante is true of our author and his poem.

"It belongs to the world of what I call the high dream and the modern world seems capable only of the low dream. Dante's is a visual imagination. It is a visual imagination in a different sense from that of a modern painter of still life; it is visual in the sense that he lived in an age in which man still saw visions. It was a psychological habit the trick of which we have forgotten, but as good as any of our own. We have nothing but dreams and we have forgotten that seeing a vision, a practice now relegated to the aberrant and the uneducated, was once a more significant, interesting and disciplined kind of dreaming." It is in this sense that we speak of the visual imagination of Mullai-p-paṭṭu. Nappūtaṉār lived in an age when people saw visions, and heard voices. Their ideals were thus taking a concrete form of life. They lived in the Divine Presence. Therefore the vision here is not a trick of a Fairy tale but a real Deus ex machina of a very high poetic order.

The vision has taken the form of poetic art, and this art alone stands revealed to us in this poem. It is beautiful, satisfying, self-contained, self-organised, and complete—a reunion of the intelligence, and passion of feeling springing from mind and of thoughts springing from heart. It is beautitude itself revealing as the rhythmic creation of Beauty where we are often made to feel like Poe with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp, are stricken notes which

cannot have been unfamiliar to Angels. The poem is a Mantiram of the poet full of meaning and suggestion—the message of his life. (Tol. 1435).

1. "Shorter hence-forward will my language fall,
Of what I yet remember than an infant's,
Who still his tongue doth moisten at the breast."

2. "Nor because more than one unmingled semblance,
Was in the living lights on which I looked,
For it is always what it was before."

3. "But through the sight that fortified itself,
In me by looking one appearance only,
To me was never changing as I changed."

4. "Within the deep and luminous subsistance,
Of the High Light appeared to me three circles,
Of three-fold colour and of one dimension."

5. "And by the second seemed the first reflected,
As Iris by Iris and the third,
Seemed fire that equally from both is breathed."

6. "Speech is feeble and falls short,
Of my conceit and this to what I saw,
Is such it is not enough to call it little."

7. "But my own wings were not enough for this,
Had it not been that then my mind there smote,
A flash of lightning wherein came its wish."

8. "Here Vigour failed the lofty fantasy,
But now was turning my desire and will,
Even as a wheel that equally is moved,
The love which moveth the sun and other stars."

(DANTE).

MULLAI-P^{1}-PĀṬṬU

(Text)

naṉantalai -y^{2}-ulakam vaḷai-i nēmi-y^{2}-oṭu
valampuri poṟitta mā tāṅku taṭa-k^{1}-kai
nīr cela nimirnta māal pōla-p^{1}-
pāṭ(u^{3}) imiḻ paṉi-k^{1}-kaṭal paruki valaṉ ērpu
kōṭu koṇṭ(u^{3}) eḻunta koṭuñcelav(u^{3}) eḻili
perum peyal poḻinta ciṟu puṉ mālai
aruṅkaṭi mūtūr maruṅkil pōki
yāḻicai -y^{2}-iṉavaṇṭ(u^{3}) ārppa nelloṭu
nāḻi koṇṭa naṟu vī mullai
arump(u^{3}) avil alari tūuy-k^{1}- kai toḻutu
peru mutu peṇṭir viricci niṟpa-c^{1}-
ciṟu tāmpu toṭutta pacalai-k^{1}- kaṉṟiṉ
uṟu tuyar alamaral nōkki -y^{2}-āy makaḷ
naṭuṅku cuval acaitta kaiyaḷ kaiya
koṭuṅkōl kōvalar piṉṉiṉṟ(u^{3}) uyttara
iṉṉē varukuvar tāyar eṉpōḷ
naṉṉar naṉ moḻi kēṭṭaṉam ataṉāl
nalla nallōr vāy-p^{1}-puḷ ṭevvar
muṉai kavarntu koṇṭa tiṟaiyar viṉai muṭittu
varutal talaivar vāyvatu nī niṉ
paruvaral evvam kaḷai ma -y^{2}-ōy-eṉa-k^{1}-
kāṭṭavum kāṭṭavum kāṇāḷ kaluḻ ciṟantu
Pū-p^{1}-pōl uṇkaṇ pulampu mutt(u^{3}) uṟaippa-k^{1}-
kāṉ yāṟu taḻīiya akal neṭum puṟaviṉ
cēṇ nāṟu piṭavamoṭu paimputal erukki
vēṭṭu-p^{1}-pulai -y^{2}-aruppam māṭṭi-k^{1}- kāṭṭa
iṭu muḷ puricai -y^{2}-ēmuṟa vaḷaii-p^{1}-
paṭu nīr-p^{1}- puṉariyiṉ paranta pāṭi
uvalai-k^{1}- kūrai -y^{2}-oḻukiya teruvil
kavalai muṟṟam kāval niṉṟa
tēmpaṭu kavuḷa ciṟu kaṇ yāṉai
ōṅku nilai-k^{1}- karumpoṭu katir miṭaint(u^{3}) yātta
vayal viḷai -y-^{2}-iṉ kuḷak(u^{3}) uṇṇātu nutal tuṭaitt(u^{3})
ayil nuṉai maruppil tam kai-y^{2}-iṭai-k^{1}- koṇṭeṉa-k^{1}-
kavai muḷ karuviyiṉ vaṭa moḻi payiṟṟi-k^{1}-

kallā -v^{2}-iḷaiñar kavaḷam kaippa-k^{1}-
kal tōytt(u^{3}) uṭutta paṭiva-p^{1}- pārppāṉ
mukkōl acai nilai kaṭuppa naṟpōr
ōṭā val vil tūṇi nāṟṟi-k^{1}-
kūṭam kutti-k- kayiṟu vāṅk(u^{3}) irukkai-p^{1}-
pūn talai-k^{1}- kuntam kutti-k^{1}- kiṭuku niraittu
vāṅku vil araṇam araṇam āka
vēṟu pal perumpaṭai nāppaṇ vēṟ(u^{3}) ōr
neṭuṅkāḻ-k^{1}- kaṇṭam kōli -y^{2}-akam nērpu
kuṟuntoṭi muṉ kai-k^{1}- kūntalañ ciṟu puṟatt(u^{3})
iravu pakal ceyyum tiṇ piṭi -y^{2}-oḷ vāḷ
viravu vari-k^{1}- kacciṉ pūṇṭa maṅkaiyar
ney-y^{2}-umiḻ curaiyar neṭuntiri-k^{1}- koḷīi-k^{1}-
kai-y^{2}-amai viḷakkam nantutoṟum māṭṭa
neṭu nā -v^{2}-oṇ maṇi niḻattiya naṭu nāḷ
atiral pūtta āṭu koṭi-p^{1}- paṭāar
citar varal acai vaḷikk(u^{3}) acaivan tāṅku-t^{1}-
tukil muṭittu-p^{1}- pōrtta tūṅkal ōṅku naṭai-p^{1}-
peru mū tāḷar ēmam cūḻa-p^{1}-
poḻut(u^{3}) aḷant(u^{3}) aṟiyum poyyā mākkaḷ
toḻutu kāṇ kaiyar tōṉṟa vāḻtti
eṟi nīr vaiyakam velīiya celvōy niṉ
kuṟu nīr-k^{1}- kaṉṉal iṉaitt(u^{3}) eṉṟ(u^{3}) icaippa
mattikai vaḷaiiya maṟintu vīṅku ceṟiv(u^{3}) uṭai
mey-p^{1}-pai pukka veruvarun tōṟṟattu
vali puṇar yākkai vaṉ kaṇ yavaṉar
puli-t^{1}-toṭar viṭṭa puṉai māṇ nal-l-il-
tiru maṇi viḷakkam kāṭṭi-t^{1}- tiṇ ñāṇ
eḻiṉi vāṅkiya īraṟai-p^{1}- paḷḷiyuḷ
uṭampiṉ uraikkum uraiyā nāviṉ
paṭam pukum milēccar uḻaiyar āka
maṇṭ(u^{3}) amar nacaiyoṭu kaṇ paṭai peṟāat(u^{3})
eṭutt(u^{3}) eṟi -y^{2}-ekam pāytaliṉ puṇ kūrntu
piṭi-k^{1}-kaṇam maṟanta vēḻam vēḻattu-p^{1}-
pāmpu pataipp(u^{3}) aṉṉa parūu-k^{1}-kai tumiya-t^{1}-
tēmpāy kaṇṇi nalvalam tirutti-c^{1}-
cōṟu vāytt(u^{3}) oḻintōr uḷḷiyum tōl tumipu
vai-n-nuṉai-p^{1}- pakaḻi mūḻkaliṉ cevi cāytt(u^{3})
uṇṇāt(u^{3}) uyaṅku(m) mā cin tittum
oru kai paḷḷi -y^{2}-oṟṟi -y^{2}-oru kai

muṭiyoṭu kaṭakam cērtti neṭitu niṉaintu
pakaivar-c[1]- cuṭṭiya paṭaikoḷ nōṉ viral
nakai tāḻ kaṇṇi nalvalam tirutti
araciruntu paṉikku(m) muracu muḻaṅku pācaṟai
iṉ tuyil vatiyunaṉ kāṇāḷ tuyar uḻantu
neñc(u[3]) āṟṟu-p[1]- paṭutta niṟai tapu pulampoṭu
nīṭu niṉaintu tēṟṟiyum ōṭu vaḷai tiruttiyum
maiyal koṇṭum oyyeṉa -v[2]-uyirttum
ēvuṟu maññaiyiṉ naṭuṅki -y[2]-iḻai nekiḻntu
pāvai viḷakkil parūu-c[1]-cuṭar aḻala
iṭam ciṟant(u[3]) uyariya -v[2]-eḻu nilai māṭattu
muṭaṅkiṟai-c[1]- coritarum mā-t[1]-tiraḷ aruvi
iṉ pal imiḻ icai -y[2]-ōrppaṉaḷ kiṭantōḷ
añcevi niṟaiya -v[2]-āliṉa -v[2]-eṉṟu piṟar
vēṇṭu pulam kavarnta -v[2]-īṇṭu perun tāṉaiyoṭu
vicayam velkoṭi -y[2]-uyari valaṉ ērpu
vayirum vaḷaiyum ārppa -v[2]-ayira
ceṟi-y[2]-ilai-k[1]- kāyā añcaṉam malara
muṟi-y[2]-iṇar-k[1]- koṉṟai naṉpoṉ kāla-k[1]-
kōṭal kuvi mukai -y[2]-aṅkai -y[2]-aviḻa-t[1]-
tōṭ(u[3]) ār tōṉṟi kuruti pūppa-k[1]-
kāṉam nantiya cennila-p[1]- peruvaḻi
vāṉam vāytta vāṅku katir varakiṉ
tiri marupp(u[3]) iralaiyoṭu maṭa māṉ ukaḷa
etir cel veṇ maḻai poḻiyum tiṅkaḷil
mutir kāy vaḷḷī-y[2]-am kāṭu piṟakk(u[3]) oḻiya-t[1]-
tuṉai pari turakkum celaviṉar
viṉai viḷaṅku neṭuntēr pūṇṭa māvē.

1. -p-: letters between hyphens except 'y' and 'v' come as a result of puṇarcci, or rules of assimilation.
2. y and v come to prevent hiatus.
3. u (the short) is the original ending. The short u disappears when followed by a vowel.